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THE
DIVINE WORD OPENED.

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. DR. *J.* BAYLEY,

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON.

(Swedenborgian.)

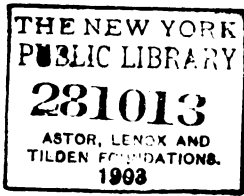
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—PSALM cxix. 105.

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PREFACE.

THESE Discourses were undertaken to illustrate the laws of the Divine Word. It is not uncommon to hear the remark, that the existence of a spiritual sense in the Word, to be brought out by a definite law, is very beautiful in theory; but an apprehension is expressed that it will not hold good. We have taken specimens from every part of the Word, whatever may be its outward style, and applied the Science of Correspondences. The original design was to take four texts from each distinct portion of the Divine Writings. To these, four on the Flood were added by much request. The result is before the reader. We pray that it be found such as to lead him, whenever he opens the Divine Volume, to offer up the prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the Word, both of the Old and New Testament, Matt. xxiii. 34; 1 Peter i. 11: "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

The Divine Word Opened.

BY THE REV. DR. BAYLEY, ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, LONDON.

“Behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks.”—Gen. xxxix. 2.

THE DAYS OF CREATION, AND THE IMAGE OF GOD.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him.”—Gen. 1. 26, 27.

THE lessons derived from the study of the Word and of the works of God, will undoubtedly harmonize if they be read aright. This idea reason hails; and with the ideas of science possessed by the Jews, there was nothing in the history of creation, as understood to be related in the divine book before us, which was felt to be improbable or untrue. They had a very limited conception of the extent of the universe. They supposed the earth to be the great central body, created some 6000 years ago. The sun, moon, and stars, brought into existence on the fourth day of creation, were satellites to the earth, situated in a vault some few miles above the surface, and the whole, revolving round the nearly flat plane on which we live, in twenty-four hours. The sun and moon were to illuminate our days and nights; the stars to add splendour to the scene. They read the Mosaic account of creation in a week; and although some little difficulty was felt, respecting light appearing before the sun, yet some apparently plausible glosses were offered, and the whole was considered tolerably clear; and in this conviction the church reposed. But now science has changed the scene. Our earth—no longer conceived to be the great centre of the universe—is known to be only one of some fifty worlds, which revolve round our sun as their centre. Some of these worlds are far larger than our own. Jupiter would make nine hundred such worlds as ours. The sun would make twelve hundred thousand earths, and shines unceasingly. He and the earths and moons of his system enveloped in his light, were we to view them from a fixed

star, all taken together would seem only like another star. Of such stars, doubtless, with their attendant worlds, there are millions in our astral system. Nay, all the gorgeous assemblage of suns and worlds which is visible to the eye and the telescope, on a magnificent night, would appear to a spectator placed on a nebula in far off space, only like a handbreadth of star-dust, of which there are myriads of others suspended in the sky. Each more perfect instrument brings us acquainted with numbers of these starry masses, so distant as to have been quite imperceptible by former telescopes. Their number, no doubt, is finite, but so vast, that the universe may be regarded as an ocean of worlds, and each sun as a drop. This ocean is so immense that light, with its inconceivable rapidity, would be hundreds of thousands of years in traversing it. Light has crossed it, to us, from points so remote as to require all those years for transit; therefore those stars and systems must have existed so long. —

How sublime is the scene which is thus opened upon us! How immensely is our idea of Jehovah's government enlarged! And everywhere there is order, silent majesty, the reign of law. Everywhere there is infinite intelligence manifested in securing the attainment, in every portion of the vast whole, of perfect harmony, and perfect safety. And what is infinite intelligence, working unceasingly for benevolent ends, but the effulgence of infinite love? Immeasurable benevolence, operating by immeasurable wisdom—this is the perfect source of all creation, preservation, and blessing.

Love and wisdom—the love which desires to impart happiness, and the wisdom by which it secures its aim—these provide the leaf which forms the joys of the meanest insect's life. These pour forth, with inexhaustible bounty, all that gives variety, abundance, and pleasure to every living thing. These warm us in the sunbeam, and radiate in all the beauties of the light. These we recognize in the perfect order of the planets, and in the regular supplies they obtain from the sun. These are manifest in the stability of the whole system; and we may follow them into the farthest depths of space, still having their bright evidences flashing back upon us, until—

"All thought is lost, and reason drowned
In the immense survey.
We cannot fathom the profound,
Nor trace Jehovah's way."

When we cannot embrace the incalculable greatness of the universe, we can yet perceive everywhere the exhibition of the divine perfections, and acknowledge the evident power and presence of our heavenly Father; and we instinctively exclaim:—

"These are thy glorious works, parent of good,
Thine, this universal frame! Thus wondrous fair!
Thyself, how wondrous then!"

But fruitful as the discoveries of astronomy are, in suggestions calculated to awaken adoration, gratitude, and humility, we cannot conceal from ourselves that they take us to contemplations of spaces, and distances, quite inconsistent with the age of the universe, as drawn from the literal account in Genesis. If, as the astronomers tell us, many of the heavenly bodies are so distant, that it would require hundreds of thousands of years for light to come from them to us—which light has reached us, or we could not see them—then they must have existed for so long a time, and, therefore, did not begin to exist on the fourth day of a week some six thousand years ago. This is the first fact we desire not to be forgotten.

A sister-science, that of geology, has been found to yield lessons equally enlarging our ideas of the Creator's grandeur, and of His providence, but equally unable to be reconciled with the first chapter of Genesis, considered as an exact divine account of natural creation. *Geo*

Geology shews that the crust of the earth, for several miles thick, has been the accumulation of plants and animals, which have lived and died, and left their remains as a proof of their existence, in ages long gone by. Beds of rocks lie one over another, with immense masses of shells, which shew the ocean lay long there; then with remains of plants indicating dry land, and periods of continued growth: again come masses of sea-remains, and these followed by immense layers of land-growth, and thus in succession to such a number and amount, that the time to form them cannot have been less than millions of years.

During all these periods the sun must have existed, as without its heat the water would have been all ICE, and fish could neither move, nor live in it. Plants could not grow without heat, nor light, nor air; and, therefore, the same general laws of nature which prevail now, must have prevailed then, during the enormous periods before any traces of man announce that he had been created.

A long line of animal races has left remains which have been restored part to part, and form complete skeleton existences, with eyes and every portion of the animal constitution; indicating that light existed, and, in fact, that all those wise arrangements which infinite goodness and unerring wisdom sustain now for human happiness, were sustained then. In those far off ages, when the earth was being prepared, by an unutterably loving and all-wise provider, for the residence, after millions of years,

of beings in the full image of Himself, with all the requirements of civilized life. These preparations, in the remote ages of the world's youth, of those incalculable forests, which afterwards became our coal-fields, of those accumulated remains of shells, which afterwards formed our mountains of limestone, marble, and chalk, in all their varieties; these all speak of laws producing then, as now, beneficent results; of wisdom framing and directing the laws of love, from which such wisdom flowed; for—

"I cannot go,
Where universal love not smiles around."

Yet, must it be confessed, that all this stands irreconcilable with Genesis in its ordinary interpretation. If the sun were shining, enabling animals to see, and causing plants to grow, millions of years since, what am I to do with the account which states that the sun was created on the fourth day of a week, only about six thousand years ago? If long ages passed, in which life, and growth, and death proceeded nearly as they do now in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, before man appeared upon the earth, how can this agree with the account which states that on the third day of this week vegetables first came into being, and which brings man into being six days after the earth itself commenced its existence?

If, when we are learning these lessons of science, we were reading some other literary production merely human, we might say we will abide by the Revelation to Moses, for that is divine. But in reading the heavens and the earth, we know they ~~are~~ a divine book also. The knowledge they disclose is from God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork." And the revelations they make of the divine greatness and goodness are so humbling and hallowing to the devout soul, we would not, must not, part with them—they are divine teaching. All revelation must harmonize when truly understood. What then is to be done? Let us see.

Some learned and pious minds have suggested that, perhaps, the days in Genesis mean, not periods of twenty-four hours, but great epochs, possibly thousands of years in duration; and noticing the fact that a day is often used in the Sacred Scriptures in other senses than the scientific one, have quoted the passage, "A thousand years, in thy sight, are but as a day that is past." —Ps. xc. 4.

But, if we try to apply these long periods to the actual account in Genesis, we shall find the difficulties are not at all smoothed by such an explanation. What could be meant by—

the first great period in which the Divine Being divided the light from the darkness, and called the light day, while there was as yet no sun at all? What could be meant by the evening and the morning of such a great day? What can we conceive of the second of such great days, when the water was divided into waters above, and waters below the firmament? Is there such a division in nature? And could it take a thousand years, or ten thousand years, to make it? What could be meant by the third of such great epochs, when the sea was divided from the land, and when plants first grew, although there was yet no sun? Can we conceive of this for ten, or any other number of thousand years? The water in such an absence of the sun could not have been liquid; and in stiffness, torpor, and cold, the inevitable concomitants of the sun's non-existence, no movement or growth could be possible. What could be meant by the seventh of such days, in which God is said to have rested from His labours, and originated the Sabbath? Could this be a thousand or ten thousand years long? And does not the Divine Being still produce and still sustain as actively as ever? Does not geology also teach us that, at the time when the earliest strata were formed, the plants and animals then in being must have lived in such circumstances as imply undoubtedly that the sun shone, and the general laws of nature were the same as now? Besides, all science leads to the conclusion that the earth was formed by the Creator from the sun, and therefore must have existed after, not before, that body. All these considerations shew that the mode of solving the difficulty, by making the days to be epochs, solves nothing, but creates additional perplexity. Others have proposed the suggestion that, probably, all geological phenomena should be considered as having taken place at a period before that of which the Bible speaks—that is, before the beginning. But this would so entirely denude the divine account of any feasible meaning, that we cannot be otherwise than unwilling to admit a solution which would make divine revelation pretend to give an account of creation, which was, in fact, no creation. If the record in Genesis is to be understood naturally, it is a history of the origin of the heavens and the earth. If the heavens and the earth were really in existence millions of years before, and the earth during those years was swarming with life and being, the six days cannot be called days of creation, in any proper sense whatever. We cannot for a moment admit that man can do better than his Maker, in what that adorable Maker proposes to do. If the narration in Genesis is not a model of a scientific history of natural creation, we are persuaded it is be-

cause God never intended it to be so. If He made a history, it would be the perfection of history; for He does all things well. The reason why the divine narrative in Genesis is not a perfectly accurate description of natural creation is, that it was never intended to be so understood. It is written in the divine style, and is a description of spiritual creation, as it took place in the earliest ages of man's existence. This divine style is peculiar to the Word of God, and underlies it everywhere. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—Isa. lv. 8, 9.

In this divine style the outer universe is a grand symbol of an inner universe in the minds of men. Each mind is a heaven and earth on a small scale. The developement of the principles which conduce to the perfection of the soul, is exactly portrayed by the creation of a world. Whether we speak of one mind or of many minds forming a church, it amounts to the same thing. Creation is the symbol of regeneration. "If any man be in Christ," says the apostle, "he is a new creature; old things have passed away; behold *all things are become new*."—2 Cor. v. 17. "I have put my words into thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."—Isa. li. 16. Here we have creation, but evidently a mental one, described. We have the exact counterpart of the commencement of Genesis in Jer. iv. 22, 23, 25. "For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form (*empty*) and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld, and there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled."

Here the state of mankind is described as reduced to the darkness of ignorance, and utter emptiness of all that is beautiful and good, by their obstinate folly; and this is represented by the emptying and darkening of a world. When the restoration of a heavenly state is the subject of prophecy, it is spoken of as the formation of a new universe. Take as an instance, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."—Isa. lxv. 17, 18.

Such is the divine style; the outer world is the type of the inner one. The ruin of a church, or of a soul, is represented by the wreck of a world. The restoration of intelligence, order, righteousness, purity, and peace, are symbolized by a new creation.

This principle pervades the whole Word of God. The recognition of it will relieve from many an error which has been held both in relation to what has been taught as to the beginning of the world, and also respecting its end. The ancients knew this well, and they delighted to know it. The oldest writing known, except the Bible, says, "All things which are in the heavens are also upon earth, but in an earthly manner; and all things on the earth are also in the heavens, but in a heavenly manner." Plato speaks of "all material things being symbols of immaterial," and "pictures of the Divine Mind."

When the Lord is represented in Job as saying, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"—(Job xxxviii. 4, 6, 7) it is not of the outer earth He speaks, for what are its foundations? or what its corner stone? It is the church, whose foundations are the divine commandments; and its corner stone, that which the apostle indicated when he wrote, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. iii. 11. He is the head stone of the corner, and when His church, his spiritual earth, is built on Him, the sons of God and the morning stars do indeed shout for joy.

It might relieve the fears of many a simple soul, a slave to the "*letter that killeth*," who is ever and anon frightened with the cry, "The world is going soon to be at an end," to observe, the world has often been at an end, according to the scriptural and divine meaning of that phrase. Not God's world. Oh no; that needs no ending; that is perfect for God's grand purposes, and will remain so. Eccles. xi. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 69; xciii. 1; xcvi. 10; civ. 5. All we have to do, is to become better acquainted with that, and use it in all its glorious relations as a seminary for heaven. But man's world consists of his worldly principles, habits, and practices; society such as he forms it, including the church as visible among men. This state of society, although it may have started on sound principles, becomes by degeneracy ripe for ruin, and then it falls, and gives

place to a better dispensation, a new church, and society. This is the passing away of one heaven and earth, and the commencement of a new one.

When David said, "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah."—Ps. lxxv. 3),—he spoke not of the material, but of the moral earth. When he wrote, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Ps. lxxxii. 5); he would be confined in his ideas indeed, who supposed some foundations of the natural world were meant. See also the whole of Isa. xxiv., where the earth is represented as utterly dissolved and ruined by human iniquity, and the inhabitants burned, v. 6, in language utterly unintelligible, unless we remember that the earth means the church, and the fires which most fatally burn men, are their passions.

When in the early days of our race—the golden age—men regarded the world as the outbirth and the emblem of spiritual things, it was to them a living, ever-teaching book. The sky in its sublime depths, and the glorious lights there, spoke to them of the grandeur of God and the order of heaven. The silent majesty of the mountains told them of the peace which is the attendant of great interior principles. The heat, the light, the dew, the rain, were the types of the love that warms, the truth which enlightens, the calm lessons of wisdom and instruction which descend into the soul, and fertilize it. Each flower was the type of some lovely thought, each fruit tree, of those who are fruitful in good works; "trees of righteousness, of the planting of Jehovah."—Isa. lxi. 3.

This was a philosophy of a diviner sort than that which simply weighs, measures, and tickets nature, and has nothing further to say. This led them through nature, up to nature's God. Such wisdom was the delight of the early wise ones, with whom hieroglyphics, and those beautiful myths of the early poets originated. These things, so dark to men of severe science now, were well understood then; and will be once more understood, when men will give themselves diligently to learn again the divine style of correspondences in which God speaks to man.

To men of reverential feeling, and minds enlightened by heavenly wisdom, the world has ever an inner as well as an outer side. They feel they are inhabitants of two worlds—a natural and a spiritual one. The outer, they regard as the counterpart of the inner, and all the movements of the latter are the speaking signs of changes of state within them, and in

the spirit world. In the cloud, and in the sunshine, in the storm and in the calm, in all the objects of the mineral, vegetable, and animal worlds, they see the reflections of principles and states in the soul. Through these they walk, and hear the Deity speaking to them every where, but chiefly in His Word; and they know what is meant there when it is written, "O earth, earth, earth! hear the Word of the Lord."

The days of creation are the seven stages, or grand states, of spiritual creation, and not natural days at all. "Ye are all the children of the day," said the apostle: "we are not of the night, nor of darkness."—1 Thess. v. 6. The *day* of Christ, the *day* of salvation, the *day* of the Lord, are terms common in the Sacred Scriptures to indicate states of the church and of man. "The light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when Jehovah bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."—Isa. xxx. 26. To be a type of these spiritual days, the week was originally instituted in the most ancient times, far beyond the Jewish Dispensation, and in allusion to these seven spiritual days of regeneration, not to any days of nature, it is said in the third commandment, "In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them." The labour the Lord rests from, is the labour of regenerating the soul, so long as there is opposition there. The rest, He has, is the peace there is, when all within us is conformed to His Holy Spirit; and though we are still ever active for good, there is neither oppression nor weariness in us. All within us is moved by the all-softening, all-controlling power of love. This is the sabbath of the soul, the seventh day.

The existence of light before the sun, the source of light, came into being, has presented serious difficulty to the thoughtful. But, in spiritual creation, light, which means knowledge, ever comes before the sun, which signifies the love of God as unfolded in the soul. There is light on the first day, the sun is made manifest later. The second day contains the work of dividing the waters into two parts—the waters above the firmament, and the waters below the firmament. To the ignorant simplicity of the untaught mind, which supposed rain and snow to come from immense reservoirs, which God had in reserve above the clouds, this account presented nothing at which it stumbled; but now we are aware that rain does not come from such celestial storehouses, but is raised by evaporation from the sea. What, then, is meant by this division of the waters? In spiritual creation it signifies the advance of the soul to the discernment that the instruction which

it has previously received in mass, into the memory, like the general mass of waters, is to be divided into two grand classes— instruction concerning our duties to God, and instruction concerning our duties to man. On these two hang all the law and the prophets. Instruction concerning God, heaven, and heavenly things, is the water above the firmament. Every thing we are taught concerning our duties in relation to man and time, is water below the firmament. The earth is said in the twenty-fourth Psalm to be founded upon the seas, and established upon the floods, in relation to the same kind of waters as those named in the Divine Word before us. It is the instruction from the Word which covers the mind, as the waters cover the sea.

The next day, or the third state, discloses a fresh advance—the waters are gathered by themselves, and the dry ground appears. There are also brought forth grasses, herbs, and fruit-trees. In spiritual things this day's work unfolds that great change of our states in our mental progress, when we perceive that valuable as instruction and truth are, duty and goodness are far more so. "The *good ground*," said the Lord in the parable of the sower, "are they, who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."—Luke viii. 15.

When we appreciate heartily those sacred words, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," then our third state has begun. In loving and cultivating obedience to the Lord, there grow over the soul quiet thoughts on which the heart can rest, and say, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."—Ps. xxiii. 1. As we read the letter of Holy Word, blades of consolation spring up on every side. "There is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear."—Mark iv. 28. Here, these happy confiding thoughts are called grass. The higher perceptions of heavenly things which enable us to teach others, are called the herb yielding seed, and the perceptions which flow from inward faith are the trees yielding fruit: those trees of righteousness, branches of the planting of Jehovah, Isa. lxii. 2; and when these things are brought forth, the soul is ready for the dawning of a still higher day. The prophet says of the church triumphant,—“Thy sun shall no more go down; nor thy moon withdraw itself: for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”—Isa. lx. 20.

Divine love and wisdom are the sun and moon of the regenerating soul, as they are of the kingdom of heaven. When they begin to shine more or less brightly in the mind, and the

will is warmed by hallowed affection, the love of God shed abroad within the heart glows like a little sun there; and the intellect illuminated by spiritual intelligence, like a moon from within. These luminaries, nobler than those of nature, are perceived as signs and foretokens of what we shall be. It is summer when holy love is fully felt within us; it is winter when all is chilled by the presence of harassing anxieties, the result of temptation. It is day when all is bright with us; it is night when our states have become dim. Our whole concern is with our spiritual years; and when we read the individual verses of Holy Writ they shine now with a meaning they never had before: they are like stars in the firmament. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day-dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts,"—2 Pet. i. 19.

"Unto him that overcometh I will give the morning star." Rev. ii. 28. In the fourth state, when the soul is conscious of the presence of divine things, the whole Word become a glorious milky way, studded with stars of different magnitudes, but each affording its charming and beautiful light; and God "made the stars also."

When this consciousness of the power of love and the light of wisdom in the soul has been attained and realized, the new creation can make a fresh advance. A heavenly activity of thought is engendered,—a holy ingenuity is exercised in deducing principles of scientific determination, and of sublimely rational thoughts, on all subjects. These spiritual sciences are the fish of the holy waters (Ezek. xlvii. 10), and of the fifth day; while the birds of the spiritual atmosphere are those lofty conceptions which soar up in the good man's spirit, and gather from the glories of eternity prospects which cheer and encourage him to bear the burdens of time. "They mount up with wings like eagles; they run, and are not weary; they walk, and never faint."—Isa. xl. 31.

While the intellect is thus busy with new thoughts, and man is confirming in himself ideas of truth and goodness of every kind, it is his fifth day.

But now another state arises, when in the will all good affections are brought forth in abundance. These are represented by the living creatures the ground brought forth. Desires to live in every habit we have, in harmony with the spirit of heaven, are ever present with us. Our lowest creeping things are alive. All our natural affections, the beasts of our earth, are filled with the spirit and purpose of heaven. Jehovah

makes a covenant, as he says in Hosea ii. 18, with the beast of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the earth. In fact, all things in us praise the Lord. We delight to be conformed to His will. We take up the language of the Psalms to our little spiritual universe; Ps. cxlviii. 7, 10, "Praise Jehovah from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps; beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl." And when the whole mind is thus filled with spiritual life we are prepared for the next grand change to be introduced by the Lord, and announced by the sublime words "Let us make man."

But before we proceed with the consideration of the sublime idea presented by these divine expressions, we will notice the criticisms which have sometimes been made on the word God, as well as on the plural pronouns contained in the verse before us—the pronouns US and OUR.

The word translated God is Elohim, the plural of El; and the explanation offered by some is, that three persons exist in God; and the same reason will account, say they, for US and OUR in the text.

But these observations will not harmonise together. If Elohim (God) means three persons, then when the text declares God (Elohim) said "Let us make," if Elohim addressed any one equal to himself, he must have addressed other three or six, and thus there would be six or nine divine persons. The true reason, however, for this plural form arises from the radical signification of El, the singular, and root of the word. El signifies power. Hence it is used in the singular number often, to express the highest inmost power of Deity; the power of Infinite Wisdom flowing from Infinite Love. The Most High God is expressed by El Elyon, in Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, and elsewhere. The singular, El, is joined also with Almighty in the name God Almighty (El Shaddai), in the singular. This name El (*power*), in the Scriptures, occurs two hundred and forty-five times. The term Jehovah, generally in the English Bible translated LORD, is also always in the singular. From these considerations we may conclude, that in His own Being, Jehovah, or the Divine Love, and El, or the inmost Divine Truth, the Eternal, is always singular. One Glorious Divine Person. But when He proceeds to create, although this end is one, that of forming an ever-increasing heaven from the human race, yet the means are as multiform as the universe. The Word of God not an expression, but a living energy, the power of Divine Truth from Divine Love, must form the heavens, and through the heavens the earths of the universe. "By the Word

of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."—Ps. xxxiii. 6. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."—John i. 1, 3. This Word, the Divine Truth, the inmost power of the universe, flowing from the inmost love of Deity in Him, is one, and is meant by the singular *El Elyon*, the Most High God. But as it forms the heavens, and acts through them, as it creates the earths, and makes them the footstools of its glorious energies, it becomes innumerable powers, and is expressed by the term *Elohim*. All the heavenly influences flowing from the Divine Truth are powers, *Elohim*. When heaven became peopled with inhabitants, the angels, so far as they were receptive of the divine influences, became subordinate, *Elohim*. In the 82nd Psalm it is written, "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty (literally of God, *El*, singular); he judgeth among the gods" (*Elohim*), v. 1. "I have said ye are gods (*Elohim*); and all of you are children of the most High," v. 6. Our blessed Lord, in alluding to this passage, said, "Is it not written in your law, Ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came."—John x. 35. Thus, then, all in heaven and on earth who partake of the power of divine truth, become in a subordinate sense *Elohim* or gods; and it is to shew that all the powers of heaven and earth are, under the Highest, instruments of forming man, of raising human beings up to the character implied in that exalted appellation—man. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?"—Heb. i. 14. Even the powers within one human being, are sometimes called *Elohim*. "I will make thee an *Elohim*, a god to Pharaoh," was said to Moses, Ex. vii. 1.

We need not, therefore, wonder at the use of the plural form *Elohim*, or the pronouns *us* and *our*, in relation to the image and likeness of God, but rather adore that Infinite Goodness which works in all things, heavenly and earthly, angelic and human, intellectual and physical, to produce that godlike result, a true and real man. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The Lord, the only Divine Person, Himself, however, is the real prime mover of all the operations of creation, natural and spiritual. Isaiah says, "Thus saith the Lord (*Jehovah*, singular), thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am *Jehovah* that maketh *all things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE; that spreadeth abroad the earth BY MYSELF."—Isa. xlv. 24. And in the verse following

our text it is written, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created HE him; male and female created HE them." He employs others, to give *them* the happiness of co-working with Him. He needs us not, but we need the holy employment of being instruments in His hands, of working out His divine designs of love and mercy, and therefore He says, "Let us make man."

But what is man? The ready answer of the inconsiderate would be, a person in human shape. Our Lord did not judge so, when speaking concerning Herod, he said, "Go, tell that fox, to-day and to-morrow I do cures, and cast out devils, and the third day I shall be perfected." Herod displayed the cunning which makes the peculiar life of the fox, and the blessed Saviour called him by that name.

Animals have no moral sense,—they obey their instincts. No conscience can be formed in them, for this involves knowledge, judgment, decision, choice, and inward determination, to carry out the right. The moral adoption of what is good and true, constitutes true manliness. The more goodness and truth a person adopts, the more is he a man. Infinite goodness and infinite truth form the one perfect divine man, the Lord Jesus Christ; and we become His image as we receive from Him these essentials of manhood.

"Run ye, to and fro, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it."—Jer. v. 1. Here is the divine definition of a man. He executeth judgment. He is aware he has a rational faculty, and he uses it. Undeterred by fashion or by folly, he judges for himself. He cares little for the decisions of counsels, or for creeds, except as making him acquainted with what other men have thought. He has faith in God, who gave him the powers of judgment, and who, he feels assured, expects him to use them. He has faith in the truth which God thus enables him to see, and the good to which it leads; and he is daily and fearlessly executing judgment, and doing the truth. This is a man. This will be an angel. He loves the truth above his prejudices, above his passions. He loves it, as the Lord loves it, freely. He is the image of God. He is a child of the light. He follows the light: he rejoices in it. The Saviour calls him his friend. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command ye."—John xv. 14. A true man asks only, in the requirements of duty, What has the Saviour commanded? for what he commands must be the highest truth. What does the truth teach?

and what he sees to be true, this he does. God is his law, and his example. His whole aim is to be an image of God. To raise man up to this state of true dignity and real freedom, is what is placed before us as the object of the Deity, expressed in the sublime words of our text, "Let us make man." In all the days which precede this, man acts under some sense of restraint or fear; now he is to be raised to perfect freedom. "The truth shall make you free."—John viii. 32. To see the subject in its true and real character, we must think of it, not so much as so many spoken words, uttered at a particular time, as the expression and purpose of God at all times. He is for ever saying, "Let us make man." To the angels, when he appoints them to watch over the infant spirit, and to lay therein those sweet remnants of holy goodness which form the foundation of heaven, in the soul, he says, "Let us make man."

To parents, when the young immortal is received as a gift from him, when the father admiringly regards the babe peacefully resting on its happy mother's lap, and dreams, perhaps, of possible wealth and greatness, the spirit of our Father in heaven whispers, "Let us make man." So to teachers, so to friends, so to all society; all are intended to assist in this glorious work, to produce and train beings to become images of their Maker: "Let us make man."

For this, heaven and earth have been formed and are sustained; heaven with its excellencies, and earth with its glories, are both impelled to carry out this exhortation of the Divine Creator, "Let us make man."

"Let them have dominion, continues the divine speaker, over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

He who has arrived at the liberty of the children of God; who, made free by truth, is free indeed, has dominion over all the lower principles of his mind, marshalled here before us by the various orders of animals. He goes to the sea of knowledge, and there presses into his service such principles of science as he can make truly serviceable in his life and conduct. "The kingdom of heaven, with him, is like unto a net."—Matt. xiii. 47. He casts his net on the right side of the ship, by his Saviour's command, and he gathers the good into vessels. He takes care to rule his science and make it subservient to religion. He does not become, like Pharaoh of old, absorbed by it, so as to become a mass of scientific vanity, and nothing else. The prophet called Pharaoh a "whale in his seas."—Ezek. xxxii. 2. "A great

dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, my river is my own, and I have made it for myself." The spiritual man has dominion over his fish. However numerous they may be, they must all move in the order of divine truth. "They swim in the river of God."—Ezek. xlvii. 10.

He has dominion, also, over the fowls of the air. "The kingdom of God, with him, once like a grain of mustard-seed, has grown up, and become a greater than all herbs, and shot forth great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it."—Mark iv. 32. Or, in other words, his thoughts, however high they may soar, however wide and far they may fly, will go only to seek for higher illumination, and greater power for good. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isaiah xl. 31.

Cattle are the symbols of the affections of the heart. "When these are dedicated to the Lord, they are sheep which follow the good shepherd who goes before them, and whose voice they know."—John x. 4.

A spiritual man has dominion over his cattle, and over all the earth; over his whole natural mind. The sceptre of heavenly order rules all within him, even his creeping things, his lowest appetites. "Whether he eats, or whether he drinks, he does all to the glory of God."—1 Cor. x. 31.

Such, my beloved hearers, let us become. How solemn and how inspiring is the thought, when we assemble together, to open our hearts for the divine influences, to mingle our prayers and praises together; to hear the Divine Word: the innumerable company of angels is with us, to sympathize with us, to aid us, and to rejoice with us. The God of angels himself has deigned to assure us that he, too, is there. O let us seek to rise above all earthly cares, into the atmosphere of these holy beings. Let us attend to the sacred suggestions they make. Let us co-operate with their inward breathings. Let us listen to the voice which is uttered from the eternal Father in the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and descends through all these shining ranks until it whispers in our inmost consciences—and this will be the spirit of all its utterances,—“Let us make man.” Let us co-operate with the sacred impulse, and strive at all times to execute judgment and do the truth; so shall we become true men upon earth and angels in heaven.

SERMON II.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN—ITS TREES AND FOUNTAIN.

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.”—Gen. ii. 8—10.

THE outer creation is a sublime symbol of the inner one. Matter is the outbirth and covering of spirit, and therefore corresponds to it. The universe on a grand scale is in all respects similar to the smaller world in man. These truths we have endeavoured to illustrate in the Discourse on the Days of Creation, and trust it has been seen that they afford the key to solve the difficulties in the Mosaic account of creation, which under any other view have hitherto been found so stubborn. Nothing can be conceived grander than this rule. All things of nature are the words of its dictionary. The rules of its grammar are the laws of the universe. All the scenery of our beautiful world, and all the movements which give endless variety to the grand theatre of life, are its illustrations. The sun, the moon, the stars, the air, the clouds, the vineyards, gardens, fields, and wilds of our green carpeted earth, are the letters in this wonderful book. Through these, God's Divine Wisdom is ever teaching the wise who know how to read His lessons. And the fact which we hope to demonstrate, as we proceed to open the Divine Word by this law, that the Bible and nature are unfolded by the same rule, leads the thoughtful mind gently, but firmly and irresistibly, to the conviction that the Bible and nature are equally divine, being the work of the same Divine Hand.

We have already observed that the relation of things seen to things unseen, was well understood by the men of early times.

They lived closer to God than we, and they delighted in nature chiefly as an index of things divine. Hence arose those beautiful myths, fables, and parables, in which all ancient histories lose themselves, as we trace them to their sources. The men among whom these originated understood them well. And so may we, if we apply the laws of symbols to their interpretation. Swedenborg has again brought those laws to the notice of men. And, his having done so, affords us the means of reading lessons of divinest wisdom in nature, of unfolding the dark places of the Word of God, and the mythological literature of the ancients.

It is the proof and the justification of his mission.

It will be remarked by the student of the earliest literature of the ancient world, that the remotest records all describe the primeval people as having been introduced into a magnificent garden. The Greeks speak of their paradise of the Hesperides, having trees with golden apples. In the Chinese ancient books they speak of a garden on the summit of the mountain Kouan-lun, near the gate of heaven. There is the fountain of immortality, which divides itself into four rivers. These four rivers, are the fountains of the Lord the Spirit. There is also the tree of life.* In the Persian sacred books, we have also a place of delights spoken of, more beautiful than the entire world besides, watered by a river, which was however destroyed by a great serpent which was placed in it, and became the mother of winter.† They speak also of Hom, the tree of life, near the fountain Ardouisor, the juice of which gives immortality.

The Hindoo books mention the holy Meroo, a fair and stately mountain, a most exalted mass of glory.|| It is not to be encompassed by sinful man. Many celestial medicinal plants adorn its sides, and it stands piercing the heavens with its aspiring summit, a mighty hill, inaccessible to the human mind. The Rig Veda speaks of the sweet fruit of the tree, to which the spirits which love goodness come, and which is a mystery to them who do not understand the Father of the world. Even Northern Mythology tells that "under the roots of the great ash-tree, whose boughs extend through the world and reach to heaven, is the well Mimis, in which wisdom is hidden."‡

Every reflecting mind will readily perceive that these descriptions taken from the sacred books of the oldest nations of the earth, are allegorical, not to be understood of natural productions or scenes. They indicate the belief of nations widely distant from each other; of a state of the highest goodness, wisdom, and

* *Mém. Chinois*. Vol. 1., p. 106.

† Fargard, 1 *Vend. Zend*. Vol. 1., p. 263.

|| *Wilkins' Notes to Bhagavat*. p. 146.

‡ *Edda*, 8 *Paral. Schimmelman*.

happiness, to which, in the early ages of our race, God had introduced, prepared and unperverted man. This too is taught in our text, by the garden of Eden.

That this garden, its trees, and fountain with four streams, were never intended to be otherwise than allegorically understood, the very names themselves undoubtedly imply. What is a Tree of Life? The book of Proverbs answers, Wisdom is a Tree of Life. And may we not ask the firmest adherent of the letter of the Scriptures only, did you ever find life growing on any earthly tree? Has life more than one source, and do we not regard this to be Him who is the Life? Do we not find this same tree declared in the book of Revelations to be in the midst of heaven? "To him that overcometh," it is said, "I will give to eat of the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God."—Rev. ii. 7. But can any rational mind suppose that an earthly tree has been transplanted to a spiritual and heavenly world? The idea is obviously unworthy of being rationally entertained. Again, we find the tree of life in the midst of the New Jerusalem, and on both sides of the river. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—Rev. xxii. 2. Is this at all compatible with the idea of a literal tree. Assuredly not. But when on the other hand we reflect that from the one source of life, the LORD, there descend two grand influences—Love and Wisdom—in the most intimate union; and these form the inmost powers of light and blessing to the regenerated soul—the soul in a state of paradise, then we recognize the tree of two lives in the ancient garden of Eden. We say the tree of two lives, for the word rendered life, *hachayim*, is in the dual, not in the singular, nor in the general plural, in the account of this tree in our text. The holy influence of the Lord, in its twofold character of love and light within, is the tree of lives. This is in the midst of the garden of the soul. This is the source of the joys of the angels. This is the centre, and pervades all the principles of the New Church called the New Jerusalem. The virtues it inspires in all the varying states of man's regeneration—as his faith waxes and wanes, and thus his spiritual months go on—are the twelve manner of fruits it bears. On its holy branches grow acts of patience for seasons of affliction, of gratitude for those of prosperity, of trust and fortitude in the storms of life, of benevolence, charity, and justice in our daily walk, and of hope, ever speaking of better things,

like an inward gem glittering in all the golden fruit of this divine tree. Its leaves are the truths, which are for the healing of the nations.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil, is equally indicative of a spiritual existence, not of a natural plant. For on what tree does knowledge grow, save on the human mind? The idle fancy that this tree was an apple tree, cannot be called a thought, it is a fancy having no rational ground. Can knowledge be cut from an apple, or squeezed from a fig? We find knowledge grows only as we exercise the desire to know. The knowledge of external things may well be called the knowledge of good and evil, for it is the knowledge of the results of order and disorder, of fitness and unfitness, of truths and appearances. It is an acquaintance with the outsides of things. This knowledge is useful for earthly purposes, but is not the real truth. It is a tree that has its uses in the garden, but its fruit is not to be eaten. Our own sensations give us a knowledge of ourselves, but that knowledge is full of fallacy, and needs the constant correction of a higher wisdom. We feel as if our life were our own. We are conscious of no origin of life out of ourselves. We feel that we exist, but we do not feel the stream of life from which our existence is momentarily maintained. Judging from our own sensations, we are self-existent. This, however, is an appearance, which we must beware of confirming. Let the tree grow for its own purposes, but do not eat the fruit. It is essential to our self-consciousness, and all our individual enjoyment of life and sensation, that we should seem to live as if of ourselves. Without that, we should have no sense of responsibility, no choice, no self-cultivation, no moral defined being, no individual delight or progression. Divine Love has given us this sensation of distinct consciousness of life, that we may taste the sweetness of all our blessings, as if they were entirely our own. "Verily, He is a God that hides Himself." But the more we feel as if the life and the blessings we enjoy are our own, the more should we learn from revelation, and the more should we adoringly confess that "every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of Lights." Our own knowledge is good to know and to use, but not to eat, or to confirm, and make part of ourselves. The perceptions of heavenly wisdom are the other trees of the garden; and of these we may freely eat—they are in accordance with eternal truth. But, of the tree of our own self-perceived knowledge, we may not eat, for in the day, or state, in which we eat of it, we enter upon the path of error, of self-will, of carnal-

mindedness, of spiritual death: "For to be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. viii. 6.

Our knowledge of others, is a knowledge of appearances. We see their bodies, and their outward mode of life. And this is necessary, that we may hold intercourse with them, sympathize with them, help them, rejoice with them, sorrow with them. Without it, the daily and hourly dealings of common life could not go on. To this outward perception, the body seems to be the man; its growth, is the man's growth, its decay, the man's decay, its death, the man's termination. The knowledge which we thus acquire, is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—most useful in itself, but not absolute truth. Revelation teaches us that the body is but the covering of the man. Within the outward form, there are principles, and states, and grandeurs of which the outside view gives us but little acquaintance. To know man really, we must know his immortal capabilities. This comes only from revelation, and from the Lord, but all its lessons are real truth, of them we may freely eat.

On all subjects, there is the knowledge of appearances which we may use, but not confirm, and the acknowledgment of true wisdom which we should confirm. A familiar instance is afforded every day by the progress of the great bodies which mark time. The sun appears to rise in the east in the morning; to come to the zenith at noon to set in the west, in the evening. The earth all the time appears to be a vast stationary plain. All the conveniences of life are regulated upon this supposition, yet it is death to all true philosophy to confirm it. Real truth teaches our reason that the very reverse of this is correct. The earth is in an inconceivably rapid motion; the sun is almost still. For outside life, we must act according to the appearance; for inside life, we must adopt the real truth. Both trees can be rightly admitted into our garden, but each must have its proper place, and each its proper value assigned: the tree of lives must be in the midst of the garden; the tree of knowledge of good and of evil, at the circumference.

That a garden, and especially the garden of Eden, is regarded in the Sacred Scripture as symbolic of a regenerated, cultivated state of the soul, is manifest in the declarations of the prophets. "When Balaam saw Israel encamped, and was in an inspired state, having his spiritual eyes open: he said, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters."—Numb. xxiv. 6. Here the states of

orderly and happy Israel were described to the spirit's eye in vision, as *gardens* by the river's side.

The prophet Isaiah said: "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy *soul* in drougth, and make fat thy bones: and *thou shalt be like a watered garden*, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."—lviii. 11. Jeremiah adopts the same language of correspondence: "Therefore, they shall come and sing in the heights of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all."—xxx. 12. Our blessed Lord spoke according to the same rule: "Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."—Luke xiii. 18, 19. In all these cases, a garden is undoubtedly intended to represent a state of the soul, when the trees of righteousness, whose fruits are every holy work; the flowers of lovely spiritual ideas, for "truth has its pleasure grounds," and the tones of encouragement, beauty, and blessing that charm him, as the songs of heavenly birds, fill the mind with a foretaste of heaven, and make it a paradise in miniature.

That the garden of Eden means no part of outward earth, but a state of delight resulting from the possession of heavenly graces, its name implies; the word Eden in Hebrew signifies delight; and Dr. Hirsch, the Jewish Rabbi of Luxembourg, renders it, in his Jewish catechism, the garden of joy; and evidently perceives, and admits, its symbolical character.

True joy, however, which the Lord who planted this garden prepares for man, is only to be obtained in a high and holy state of the soul, and is not dependent upon places. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."—Rom. xiv. 17.

This circumstance gives us the reason why the site of Eden has never been found. Persons who have had no higher idea of the Divine Word than the literal one, have sought every where to discover a land watered by four rivers flowing from one fountain; one of the rivers being the Euphrates. No satisfactory discovery has ever been made. To find it, they have explored regions the most distant in Asia. Africa has also been well searched, but in vain. Some of the so-called Fathers have supposed it would be found under the earth. It has been like the

search of children for the house Beautiful, mentioned by Bunyan. Butler, in his *Hudibras*, describes the futility of such labour in vain, when he says of his hero:—

“He knew the seat of Paradise,
 Could tell in what degree it lies;
 And as he was disposed, could prove it,
 Below the moon, or else above it.”

To account for the geographical failure, some have suggested that the flood had destroyed the boundaries of Eden. But all have admitted that the exact site could not be found. And yet, according to the prophet, the king of Tyre had found it, and been in it, many hundreds of years after the flood, if it also was a natural event. “Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was created in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.”—Ezek. xxviii. 12—14.

If the garden of Eden means a cultivated, enlightened, and happy state of mind, this language is not difficult to be understood. The precious stones represent precious truths; the stones of fire, truths glowing with love. The tabrets and pipes are descriptive of the music of the soul when joyfully acknowledging the goodness of the Divine Creator. The mountain of God means the exalted love of the soul when it adores Him above all things. In a state of this kind the king of Tyre might have been, but it is quite impossible that he could have been in any literal Eden, which must have been destroyed centuries before he was born.

Another mention of the trees of Eden is made by the same prophet in chapter thirty-one, where the language of the whole chapter is unquestionably allegorical. “Behold,” it is said, “the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.”—ver. 3. Of the Assyrian thus represented by a majestic cedar, the prophet proceeds to say: “The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him: the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chesnut trees were not

like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him."—ver. 8, 9. Again: "I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to hell, with them that descend into the pit: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth."—ver. 16. Here, it is manifest, no natural trees can be meant. These could not envy the Assyrian, or strive to hide him. These could not be comforted, when they went down to the pit, with them that are slain. From every consideration, therefore, it is clear, that in the Divine Word, Eden and its trees are the types of a mental and spiritual paradise, not of a natural garden.

The river which watered the garden, with its four heads of subordinate streams, though nowhere found in nature, is easily found in spirit. It is that Divine Truth, which is called the "river of the water of life" (Rev. xxii. 1), which is meant by the river of God, which is full of waters; and that holy stream which the prophet saw, and which "made every thing live where it went."—Ezek. xlvii. 9. Divine Truth as it descends from the Lord comes as one river, but as it is received by man it is parted into four great divisions, faith, and knowledge, reason, and science, and these illustrate the different departments of the mind, which are like so many countries into which they flow.

The first river, Pison, or *abounding*, as the Hebrew word signifies, the full broad stream of intelligence which flows into the soul when we are in faith inspired by love. The gold of that land, the celestial love, which makes us rich in the divine sight (Rev. iii. 18) is good. There is the bdellium, or pearl, and the onyx, or ruby. The two stones, the white and the red, represent the precious gems of thought possessed by persons in this state on all subjects, both of the intellect and of the heart.

The second river, Gihon, or the *valley of grace*, is representative of truth as imparted under the form of knowledge. It is more limited, and external than the former. It compasseth the land. Such knowledge as compared with the light of interior faith, is as the letter compared to the spirit of the Divine Word. But yet Divine Truth in the letter is a valley of grace. It is a covering, a defence, and an introduction to the inner glories of religion.

The third river, Hiddekel, or *sharp-flowing*, is expressive of the keen light of reason. It is said, to go eastward to Assyria, because Assyria is the land which is ever used in the Divine

Word as the symbol of those whose chief delight is to see every subject submitted to them, rationally. It is said to go eastward, for the direction towards the sun-rising, in spiritual language, signifies towards that state of love to the Lord in which He as the Sun of Righteousness can arise upon the soul, with healing in his wings. This river goes eastward, in all cases when our reasoning is all Godward; in favour of righteousness, holiness, and heaven.

The fourth river, Euphrates, *that which grows*, the stream that bordered Assyria, is the representative of science. This is the lowest form in which truth is obtained by the soul; but with observation, it constantly grows and serves to illustrate all that the mind interiorly sees. Happy is it with man when all these streams are received and harmonize together. His state is then an Eden indeed; a paradise of light, and love, and joy.

We must now notice two particulars which are somewhat striking in themselves, and have served to confirm theories entirely incompatible with the authority of this portion of the Divine Word, as a revelation from Infinite Wisdom. The first is, that notwithstanding in the preceding chapter it is said, that "God made man, male and female, on the sixth day," yet in the present chapter (ver. 5) it is said, after the seventh day, "there was not a man to till the ground." It has been suggested that the creation of Adam, as recorded in the second chapter, is a detailed account of what is briefly stated in the first; but no ingenuity can make it probable that all the proceedings related to have taken place, from the creation of Adam to the formation of Eve from his rib during his sleep, could be the work of one day only. He is said to have named all the animals in the time, and to have discovered that it was not good for man to be alone. Can it be supposed that all which is implied in these operations could be the work of twelve, or even twenty-four hours? Impossible. We must seek for a higher reason; and happily this is afforded. We observed in our first discourse that, in the first chapter of Genesis, the regeneration of man is the theme, up to that state in which truth becomes his only law and guide. He is then a true man, and a free man, in the image of his God. His religion is not constrained now, as it is in all the states meant by the days preceding the sixth. Hence, at the conclusion of that day, all things are pronounced by the Divine Being to be very good. Man is in that state a truly spiritual man; he conquers in every trial to which he is subjected. But there is a state better still; it is that in which LOVE is the supreme law—in which man is more than conqueror: he is no longer the sub-

ject of temptation. There is no labour in his states; all is rest, not the rest of inactivity, but a rest from struggle—a state of interior peace—a sabbath of the soul. This is truly a celestial state. The former chapter traced man's mental creation,—his spiritual progress, up to the stage of his becoming fully spiritual; but this chapter is taking the description forward until he becomes celestial. Up to the period described in this verse there was no man to till THIS ground, to cultivate the celestial state.

We shall perhaps be able to see the interesting subjects of thought to which the spiritual sense here invites us more clearly, if we notice three remarkable features of distinction between the first chapter and the second, both of them apparently treating of the origin of things, and of man. In the first chapter water occupies the leading place; in the second chapter ground is the most important. God broods over the face of the water on the first day; He divides between the waters, on the second; he distinguishes between land and water, on the third; he made living animals and fowls, from the water, on the fifth day. In the operations of the days in the first chapter water has undoubtedly the pre-eminence, and this will readily be understood and its bearing be seen by the spiritually-minded student who knows that water, in its varied forms, is the symbol of truth—that living, purifying power which is called the water of life (Rev. xxi. 1; John iv. 10, 14). Water in the sea, is representative of truth in the memory; general, external, undiscriminated, capable of being tossed about by every wind of doctrine. Water, as gentle rain, is representative of truth as it descends from the intelligent mind of a loving teacher, or from the Lord the Divine Teacher; hence Moses said, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the rain upon the tender herb, as the showers upon the grass.”—Deut. xxxii. 2. Water, as a river, is representative of truth when it has become elevated to the inmost affections of the soul, and thence flows down again into the whole mind and life, purifying, directing, fructifying, and blessing the whole man. This is the river of God, which is full of waters (Ps. lxxv. 9; xlv. 4). In the second chapter, the only water mentioned, is the river which flowed *out of Eden*, and which was divided into four heads: a river which has never been found on earth. It is a symbol of truth flowing from the heart, when man is in a celestial state.

In the second chapter ground has the leading position. Mist comes upon the whole face of the *ground*; man is made of the dust of the *ground*; out of the *ground* grow all trees, pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of lives and the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil; out of the *ground* fowls are formed (ver. 19), though in the first chapter they are formed from the water (ver. 20). Ground is the symbol of goodness; for this is the ground into which the seeds of truth should be received. The good ground is an honest and good heart, said the Lord Jesus (Luke viii. 15). Those states are properly spiritual, in which the spirit of truth is the principle from which man acts as the guiding rule of his life. Those states are properly celestial, in which love or goodness is the leading characteristic. When a man is in spiritual states he is rigidly right, aims at constant correctness in the path of duty, is perhaps brilliant, and delights in pursuing the truth, but is comparatively cold. When a man is in the celestial state, he is gentle, loving, kind, merciful, easily entreated, long-suffering, ever regarding goodness as the chief object of his care, and in all his religious duties, warm. The spiritual man regards the water of heaven or truth mainly; the celestial man, the ground of heaven, or goodness, mainly. Hence the first feature of distinction which the discriminating mind will notice between the two chapters.

The next distinctive feature between them, is in the different name employed to express the Deity. In the first chapter, everything is done by God, Elohim; in the second, by the Lord God, Jehovah Elohim. This circumstance has led some to conjecture that the two are merely separate traditions of the creation collated by Moses, and giving only the speculations of the writers respecting the origin of men and of all things. But this idea, in order to explain the difficulty of finding the Creator designated by different names, leads us to the unspeakably greater difficulty, of a denial of revelation. For, if we deny this portion of the Divine Word to be anything more than unauthorized traditions of unknown writers, we by implication deny the whole Bible to be a divine revelation, for the whole proceeds upon the basis of this early part being divinely true. And what a result is this! To think that our Heavenly Father has left his immortal children without a guide! that He who provides bounteously its food for the humblest insect has left man's spiritual demands unsatisfied! Oh no! we cannot admit so terrible a result. Man, already an angel in embryo, asks for angel's food, and He who has provided for all his other wants, must have provided for this. "Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." That which seems an imperfection in the divine revelation only appears so, because the spiritual character

of that revelation was not seen. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Ps. xix; and when its application to the soul is seen, its divine beauty and excellence at once are made manifest.

But when we ascertain the spiritual sense of the names God and Lord, we shall find that their diversity is an example of the divine excellence and perfection of the Holy Word, as well as an illustration of the truth of our principle of unfolding it. The appellation God (or powers) is expressive of the divine truths, which manifest the powers of God, and which, under the name of the divine laws, really effect all which God does in the entire universe. The appellation, Jehovah, (He who is) designates the inmost existence of Deity, the Divine Love. God is love. The two grand essentials of Deity, Infinite Love, the source of all the goodness of the Lord, and Infinite Wisdom, the source of all the truth from the Lord, are constantly referred to in the Old Testament, and discriminated from each other by these two names Jehovah, or Lord, and God. "I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me," means that we appeal to the Divine Truth, but Divine Love really saves us. "Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation," directs our attention to both divine principles as sources of interior joy. By noticing the use of these two appellations, and bearing the signification in mind, a beauty and force will be found in the Holy Word which was before unsuspected, but is eminently interesting and important.

While man is in the spiritual states of his regeneration, truth is the spring of his conduct—his guiding star, his impelling power. He follows it, he bows to it; it rules him, fights for him, recreates and renews him. Hence God does all for him in these states. Although Divine Love is really within the Divine Truth at all times, man is not consciously aware of this. He abides by the language of the poet,

"For truth alone, where'er my lot be cast,
In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste,
Shall be my chosen theme—my glory to the last."

When, however, man has entered into a celestial state, and, in all he does, *goodness* has the lead, a great change is gradually effected in his mode of thinking. He does not value truth less, but he esteems Christian love and goodness, more. He is no longer prone to dispute about truth, but is only careful to practise it. The law is written upon his heart; it is no longer the object of reasoning. He sees it by light from within; he says, Yea, yea, to what he inwardly perceives to be right, or Nay,

nay, to the reverse. He is now at peace, and has but to cultivate and preserve the virtues Divine Love and Wisdom have unfolded within him. He is in Eden, and has only to dress, and to keep it. In all the divine dealings with him now, he sees the Divine Love as manifest as the Divine Wisdom. He discerns not only the right of Providence in all things, but its mercy. It is no longer God only, but Jehovah God who leads him. It is the Deity as his Father that he rejoices to hear. He feels His LOVE around him, and within him, and he is happy. He lives in his Father's house; his Father's commands are no hard laws to him, but delightful directions. He loves the law, and has great peace, (Ps. cxix. 165). This, therefore, is the sufficient reason for the name of the Lord being Jehovah God in the second chapter, and simply God in the first.

The third distinctive peculiarity is, that man is described in the first chapter as being created male and female, on the sixth day. In the second, after the seventh day is described, he is created as Adam, alone, and not until many proceedings are narrated which cannot be supposed as having taken place in twelve or twenty-four hours, it is found not to be good for man to dwell alone, and during Adam's sleep, Eve is formed. We do not mean it to be inferred that we think man's physical creation is related in either the first or the second chapter. An enquiry into that, is the proper subject of natural science, not of divine revelation. God's Word has to do with souls, churches, and man's spiritual career, not with earthly questions which scientific lore is quite adequate to solve. There are sufficient indications of the existence of other inhabitants of the world in the time of Adam and Eve, to shew that their history is not the account of the single solitary family of human beings, then inhabiting the globe. Cain went into the land of Nod, and there he took a wife (chap. iv. 17). Whence came this wife, if there were no other people yet existing than his own father and mother? When he slew his brother Abel, and was convicted by Jehovah, he complained that when he was cast out from His presence, every one that met him would kill him, and Jehovah set a mark upon him for his protection. Of whom could he be afraid, if there were no one on earth, but his father and mother? He built a city, it is said, and called it after the name of his son Enoch (ver. 17). Whence did they get the building materials? Surely a city implies more than one family.

In thinking, therefore, of Adam, we must dismiss from our minds the idea of the natural creation of man, as the subject of our divine narrative at all. Doubtless God created the physical

universe, and man upon it; but that is not the subject now, nor of that Revelation whose grand purpose every where is not natural history, nor external events, except as the medium of conveying heavenly and divine instruction (Isa. lv. 8).

Adam is the generic name for all human beings; in Hebrew it is equivalent to MAN. Hence it is said in the fifth chapter of the book before us (ver. 2), "God created them male and female, and called THEIR name Adam in the day," &c. This single appellation, Man, was expressive, among the wise ones of old, of human beings in a regenerated state; and as these, when presented together in the divine sight, compose one body (Cor. xii. 12), the Church, however numerous they may be, they are called by this one name, MAN or Adam.

This is expressed very strikingly in the Hebrew of Ezek. xxxiv. 31: "And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are Adam, and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah."

Let us resume then the enquiry for the spiritual reason why man is spoken of in the first chapter, as having been created male and female, and in the second as Adam, alone.

In the spiritual states of man, which we have seen to be described in the first chapter, and in which truth in the intellect is the sovereign ruler, the two grand faculties of the mind are distinctly presented, as male and female. The intellect is male, for intellect predominates in the properly developed manly character; the will, the seat of the affections, is female, for the heart is the predominating characteristic of the true womanly character. Both these grand faculties are, however, found in each mind, so that, in a certain sense, each mind is male and female, and when both the heart and the understanding are combined in the reception of true religion, in that mind there is a marriage, an interior union of the truth which is understood, with the goodness which is loved: their land is married (Isa. lxii. 4), they know the truth, and they are happy because they do it.

Now, while man is in spiritual states, and has first to learn the truth by slow investigation and reasoning, and afterwards to bring his heart by further effort, to adopt the truth, and do it, he perceives these two faculties of his soul very distinctly, as though they were separate. He feels that he is male and female. But when he has entered into the celestial state, so that love from the heart rules every lower faculty and power, this divided consciousness disappears. He feels as one embodiment of love, from first to last. Heavenly love in him adores, love believes, love bears, love speaks, love acts. He becomes a form of holy love. That principle glistens in his eye, pervades his language, and if

the spirit could be visibly presented to the sight, it would be a beautiful form of celestial affections embodied. Because this state, the celestial one, is the subject of the second chapter, Adam is presented up to the time when something *not good* is discovered, and of which we shall speak in our next discourse, as dwelling in Eden alone.

We have a parallel presented in Deut. xxxiii. 28: "Israel then shall dwell in safety, ALONE: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also, his heavens shall drop down dew." Here, Israel is treated as one person, and dwelling alone, when there was nothing foreign, or adverse there. The loneliness is not that of solitariness, but of unity. So is it in the celestial state of man, or of the Church. The ruling love, being heavenly, glows like a celestial fire in the highest region of the soul, wisdom, like a flame from that fire, illuminates the whole mind with a calm and holy light, all things below, have been moulded to delightful and ready obedience, and happy order rules in every principle of the character and life. Then, man dwells in Eden, in safety, alone.

Such, then, are some of the lessons which are presented for our consideration, in the divine account of man in Eden, spiritually understood.

In this view of it, we have no longer a subject of doubt, perplexity, and profitless mystery. It is a lesson of the mode by which happiness was attained and enjoyed by the most ancient men; it is also a description of the only mode in which happiness can be attained now.

We must return to the Eden state, or we can never attain the joys of Paradise. The Lord will sow the good seed of the Word in our souls, if we will permit Him. He will give us power to cultivate our minds, and make our souls like a watered garden. We must have His love and wisdom like a tree of lives in the centre of our garden, and of its fruits we may eat and live. This is the only way of securing paradise. The kingdom of God must be formed within (Luke xvii. 21). It is indeed not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. xiv. 17). How vain is the dream of those, who fancy that to find happiness, they must seek it in distant lands—some in Jerusalem, some in Mecca, some in America. Heaven and happiness are as near in our beloved land as on any spot of God's earth, and by them who seek faithfully, by help from our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus, to subdue the sources of misery in themselves; in their vices, their passions, and their follies, whether they dwell in a palace or in a cottage, in our island, or in

distant lands, the divine promise will to them be realized. "The Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."—Isa. li. 3.

Have we, then, felt our hearts at times like a desert, cheerless, cold, and bare, our minds tossed about in the world's wide wilderness, and tormented with doubts and fancies as wild as those around us?—let us look to Him who said, "I am the vine, and My Father is the husbandman." Let Him purify our affections and rule our thoughts. Let us perseveringly co-operate with our Divine Saviour, and in due time beauty and blessing will diffuse themselves over the spirit, and peace and joy will reign for ever there. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose."—Isa. xxxv. 1.

SERMON III.

THE FALL OF MAN—THE SERPENT—AND THE CURSE INTRODUCED INTO THE WORLD.

“And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”—Gen. iii. 18.

THAT man is not now in the condition in which he must have been created, seems evident if we reflect upon the perfections of his divine Creator, or the manifest capabilities of the human constitution, and then notice the individual and social state of the race at present. When man came from the hands of his Maker, without the intervention of other human beings, he must have been complete and unperverted in his degree of life, and in his powers, though that degree and those powers were finite; since his divine Creator must have been too good not to desire to make him complete for happiness, too wise not to know how to accomplish his purpose, and too powerful not to be able to carry it into effect. Man must, therefore, have been created, at first, in a state of order, and with every power to arrive at the possession of the highest, fullest bliss. He was then the production of Infinite Love, Wisdom, and Power, which could not produce what was opposed to themselves. Possessed in embryo of all the powers which have since been developed in the human race, being, in fact, a minute heaven and earth, to be unfolded under the influence of freedom, so that he might become truly man, freely wise, and freely good, and thus freely happy; the powers of the primeval man would be gradually unfolded as they are now, and for the same purpose beginning with the lowest.

Look at the babe upon the breast. In him are enclosed the powers in embryo, which may result in the archangel. The capabilities of inventing or appreciating all arts, all talents, all improvements; all principles which may be evolved and expanded into all the glories of heaven and earth are there. “We are fear-

fully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."—Ps. cxxxix. 14.

But the order of free choice, and free existence, requires that these powers should be unfolded and adopted gradually, from the lowest to the highest. The child learns first to suck, and delights in that; this is the opening of the corporeal degree of life: subsequently, he learns to observe, by means of the senses, and through seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touch, which is the universal sense, he accumulates a vast treasure of knowledge; this is the opening of the sensual degree of life. Then comes the period for unfolding the reasoning power. He is to be led to scrutinize, to compare, to weigh, to consider the relation of one fact with another, to discriminate between realities and appearances, and thus arrive at grand general laws, and be guided by them; and thus is unfolded the natural degree of the mind. Then comes the period for opening the spiritual degree, by which, we become interested with spiritual things: we learn truths in relation to our everlasting life, and have a still higher delight in them than in the things of earth; and, lastly, there is opened that inner or celestial degree of life, by means of which we can learn and love the Divine Will supremely, the love of God, as the Supreme Good, can reign in the highest region of the soul, and thence bring the whole man into the order and bliss of heaven. Thus is the wondrous being, man, now developed, in those who carry out their preparation for heaven. Doubtless, this gradual unfolding of the degrees of life is for the sake of human freedom, the all-essential human element. We are free at every step of the progress to go on, or stop, or retrograde; to stop, however, is to resist the Divine invitations, which beckon us upward and onward, and to resist is to retrograde. So is it now, so must the law for making man freely angelic, ever have been. "Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual."—1 Cor. xv. 46. At first, man would be born innocent and ignorant, but prone to good. In his regeneration, he would proceed from lower excellencies to higher, beginning, as now, with the lowest, but advancing with comparative ease. At this day, man is born innocent and ignorant, but prone to evil, beginning also at the lowest, and advancing with difficulty, because of the evil tendencies which obstruct him at every step. If we contemplate a state of society in which all is orderly, good, and progressive, not, certainly, with the cultivation and science of modern times, but with a gentle spirit of loving obedience, reigning in all things, a sacred

delight in heavenly wisdom, and a pastoral and patriarchal simplicity in their whole lives, we shall probably have a fair idea of the condition of early, uncorrupted men. Innocence and peace dwelt serenely together; all were happy, because they were wise and good. They loved God and their neighbour, lived peacefully in families, each one contented with his own, none selfishly seeking the power or goods of another. But now, alas, how changed is the whole scene of mankind! Swarms of police, and immense standing armies are required, to prevent private and public ruffians from preying upon mankind. Wild passions are with difficulty restrained, and now and then burst all bounds, and like volcanoes which have been long pent up, but whose burning surges can no longer be held in, pour forth their rivers of scorching death on all around. Universal imperfection is admitted, and testifies to an universal fall, seen from the outside of society. But when we regard man as he is within, he who watches his own heart and mind knows how much there is to subdue, to reform, and to regenerate, before he can be happy. Others see, sometimes, what is done, but they see not what is resisted. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?"—Jer. xvii. 9. The human mind is like a magnificent building whose splendid arches and glorious proportions may be traced, but which lies in ruins. It is a volume of incalculable worth, on which the laws of eternal righteousness are to be traced in golden letters, but, alas, it is all torn and blotted, and can only, by a divine hand, be restored. The world within, is like the world without. By the diligent hand of cultivation, fair spots are formed of verdure, and of beauty lovely enough to shew what is the intention of its Maker, and what are the earth's capabilities, but at the same time it is actually infested with jungle and wild, with marsh and quagmire, with thorn and briar. Wild beasts of every hideous and terrible form, hide, and howl, and roar, and fight, and destroy there. Such is the human soul now. How came it thus? That is our present enquiry?

The history of nations has no answer to our present question. Human philosophy is equally dumb. Divine revelation imports to give an answer, and the question upon which we are now engaged is, what does the answer mean.

Those who take the early chapters of Genesis as a literal history, inform us, that a natural serpent seduced our first parents, and persuaded them to eat of a fruit which God had forbidden to be touched, and for this offence God cursed them and their posterity, the serpent, and the earth. But this is so strange an account,

that if it had not first been childishly received in the dark ages, and continued to be taught us generally in childhood, would not have been received at all. What a strange idea does it give of God, when it represents him as placing a tree needlessly in paradise; for according to this idea, its fruit was never to be tasted, it could only tantalize the inhabitants of the garden. What a character does it attribute to Infinite Love, the Best of Beings, when it describes him as so jealous of the fruit of this one tree, and so unfeeling to his immortal children as to curse them *and their unborn posterity*, because this fruit was taken! What an improbable circumstance is narrated, when we are told that our first parents in their perfect state could be seduced by an animal, and be led away from God, by a beast of the field. This has been felt to be so improbable that many have said the devil was in the serpent, but Moses says not a word about any devil entering the serpent. His words are simply, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."—Gen. iii. 1. And, if a devil was the real delinquent, how comes it to pass that he escapes without a word, while the poor serpent, his innocent tool, is punished? By this mode of understanding the narrative, the real culprit is never mentioned, the beast is condemned to go on its belly all the days of its life, and to eat dust. And what is still more wonderful, not only does the devil escape unnoticed, but the serpent takes no notice of the sort of food he is condemned to live upon, and declines to eat dust, any more than other carnivorous animals.

This serpent, too, according to a mere literal interpretation, should have its head bruised by the Messiah, and it should bruise his heel (chap iii. 15). But whoever heard of its continuing to live four thousand years, until the Saviour came, or then fulfilling this prediction?

The whole narrative is crowded with difficulties, when interpreted naturally, and becomes entirely useless. It is no warning, for no other human being would ever be tempted in that strange way. It gives no account of the origin of evil, for if the devil tempted our first parents, by entering into a serpent, to enquire into the origin of evil, would be to ask how it came to originate in him.

It is contrary to the divine dictate of our Saviour: it is not that which goeth into a man which defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the heart. For in this case, eating an outward fruit caused the defilement of the whole human race. Add to this, the account of the eating of the apple, constituting the fall, does

not explain at all the immense change that must have occurred in the human mind itself, to make it the fountain of all the mischiefs which now afflict society. How comes it, that the love of God, evidently the principle which would be highest in the soul in a state of order, is now almost powerless and obliterated from the heart? How is it that the love of self, which ought to be the lowest in the soul, is now the great inspiring principle of nearly all human minds? and in those with whom it is not so, is only opposed and subdued by the severest mental struggle, and divine help? Whence come the preferences of the abounding impurities that infest the pleasures of mankind, when all the considerations of health, of abiding peace, and social well-being, point to pure and orderly enjoyments, as being the only rational ones? Disorderly society without, is but the transcript of the disorganized mind within, and the question is, how came this so? The eating of an apple does not explain this. It may be said by those who have no clear idea of the unchanging love of God, that He inflicted the curse of this mental ruin, in consequence of His law having been despised and broken. But in doing this, they would be declaring the unchangeable to have changed, from being the Giver of life and peace, to become the Inflicter of death and misery. In attempting irrationally to account for the fall of man, they have brought forward the terrible idea of the fall of God. Oh no; we cannot for a moment admit that Infinite Love has changed, or can change: "He is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."—Ps. cxlv. 9. "I am Jehovah! I change not," he says; "therefore, O Jacob, thou art not consumed."—Mal. iii. 9. "He is the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James i. 17. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever."—Ps. cxxxvi. 1. Any doctrine which proceeds on the assumption of a changing or unmerciful Deity is thereby manifestly shewn to be untrue. He may, to our changing minds, seem to change, as to the moving earth, the sun appears to move; but as in the latter case, the sun really remains in his place, it is the earth which really changes; so in the former case man turns from God, but God remains the unchangeably good, for God is love.

But it is said, God gave a law respecting the tree of knowledge of good and evil: "Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."—Gen. ii. 17. And He was bound by His undeviating truth to put this law into execution. But here the literal interpretation meets with another difficulty, or rather with several difficulties. For, taking the

word death in the natural sense, its advocates are compelled to admit, Adam did not die *on the day* he ate of the tree, and not until nine hundred and thirty years after. If this death, were a curse, these advocates say, Christ took upon Himself the curse inflicted upon man, and so saved the human race. Of course then man ought not to die. Besides in that case, the law which it was said God was, by his undeviating truth, bound to enforce, was *not enforced after all*; for the law was "Thou shalt surely die." It says not one word of any one dying for him. The death of another would not fulfil the law, THOU shalt surely die. Lastly, all this argument respecting the inflexible law, goes upon the implied meaning of the law to be what it by no means expresses. In the day thou eatest thereof, I will cause thee to die, or I will put thee to death. There is however nothing of this kind in the announcement.

Taken in its spiritual meaning, it is a caution of merciful wisdom, warning man that if he preferred the appearances of his own knowledge, to the lessons of heavenly intelligence, meant by the other trees of the mental garden, he would come into a carnal or external state of mind, and as the apostle said, "To be carnally minded, is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. .viii. 6. Seen thus, what has been called a law, is a caution of fatherly mercy, instructing us of the inevitable consequences of slighting His will and wisdom, which are perfect goodness and perfect truth. These consequences are invariably fulfilled in the very nature of things. If we turn from the light of heaven, we become dark; if we turn from the warmth of heavenly love, we become cold; if we stay with the lower principles of our nature, and will not advance to the higher, we become selfish. And, spiritual darkness, coldness, and selfishness, constitute spiritual death. In the day, in the hour, we adopt these principles, we spiritually die, and never can be reclaimed but by the word and power of the Divine Saviour, who said in the days of his flesh; "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is *passed from death unto life.*"—John v. 24.

Having seen the difficulties which crowd around a merely natural interpretation of the serpent, and the circumstances which are connected with it in the Sacred Scriptures, and seen how full an illustration they give of what the apostle calls "the letter that killeth," let us now advance to the "spirit which giveth life."—2 Cor. iii. 6.

That the serpent is used in the Sacred Scriptures with a spi-

ritual meaning, is evident from this very book of Genesis, and almost from every other. We read, chap. xlix. 17, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward;" language this, very obscure, unless we apply to its interpretation the science of correspondences, in which, each natural object bears a representation which has an analogy to its nature and habits. The serpent lives and moves close to the earth. In warm countries it is to be found in great numbers, in great variety, and often of great size. Some kinds are harmless, but some are most deadly. They are generally insidious in their movements, and they spring from under the grass or leaves, or from their holes in the sand, ere the traveller is aware that danger is near. Some tribes exercise great power of fascination, and make it almost impossible for the animals they have destined for their prey to escape. From all these circumstances, we can easily recognize their analogy with that affection of our nature, which disposes us to delight in the gratifications of sense. The love of sensual things is useful, though its uses are of a low kind. If it were not pleasant to us to observe the beauties of our lovely world, to listen to the music of the human voice and the harmonies which nature offers, to enjoy the fragrances with which the balmy air is loaded, and to taste the savours of the food which Providence bestows to sustain and strengthen us, our bodies could not be maintained as a healthy base for the higher things of life. The serpent, though a creeping animal, has his proper place and use in the little world of the human mind. Yet in the strong excitements of sense, there is a subtle tendency to excess, that needs the constant watchfulness of wisdom, to preserve this principle in order. "The serpent is more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made."

If we love the things of sense, the scenes and charms of the outer world, only to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with their uses, and control this love by a spirit of innocence derived from religion, we are then "wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." Matt. x. 16. Many, however, there are, who suffer themselves to be so absorbed in sensual indulgence, as to lose sight and taste for everything nobler. These become altogether sensual men. In their judgments, they prefer time to eternity; the things of earth to those of heaven. Instead of advancing on the path of truth, making their intellect serve them as a goodly horse in the battle of life (Zech. x. 3), they suffer facts to be distorted to serve selfish ends, and come at last to a complete overthrow of their own noblest views and highest objects. These are, indeed,

serpents in the way, adders in the path, who bite the horse heels, and make the rider fall backward.

Some are absorbed by the ceremonies of religion, and magnify and multiply them for their own aggrandizement, to the utter neglect of their hallowed spirit and life, making much of mint and anise and cummin, and omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith (Matt. xxiii. 23), until at length they make the Word of God of none effect by their traditions. These are described by the Lord as serpents, when He said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"—Ver. 33. Others are more secret and seductive, acting by the subtle blandishments and refined sensualities, which are pregnant with ruin. These are like the smaller, but more deadly serpents, whose minutest bite is almost certain death. They only who love the Lord fervently, can subdue all the fascinations of sensual love. Of those who set their love upon him, Jehovah says, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."—Ps. xci. 13, 14. Sensual love, when chosen and preferred above the higher and holier principles that dignify the moral, the rational, and spiritual departments of our nature, makes the spirit of fiends and fiendish men, and hence is called "that old serpent, even the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."—Rev. xii. 9. To oppose this spirit, and destroy its direful power, the Lord came into the world by assuming the seed of the woman, and thus fulfilled the prophecy by bruising the head or chief power of the serpent, when he conquered hell. The infernal influences bruised his heel or lowest part, his outward human nature, while he was completely triumphant, by then glorifying his human nature, and subduing hell and death.

He gave his disciples, at first, and he still gives them, power to tread upon serpents of sensuality in themselves, as He says, "I beheld Satan like lightning fall from heaven. Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."—Luke x. 18, 19.

We have now the chief elements for understanding the divine account of man's fall. The tree of knowledge represents the knowledge we acquire by our senses; the serpent, the love of sensuous knowledge and experience, which may be good or bad, according as it is kept in its proper place, or raised to rule where it ought to serve. When the serpent is the servant of

higher principles, it inspires its possessor with circumspection; when suffered to rule, it leads to sensuality. But before pursuing the subject further in relation to the serpent, we would briefly draw attention to the fact, that the account of the decline of the human race does not commence with the notice of the serpent in the third chapter. All things are spoken of as very good, until the intimation in the eighteenth verse of the second chapter, when the Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." Here is something discovered not good, where all had been very good before. And, if we have understood the meaning of that beautiful scriptural expression, dwelling "alone," as indicating the state of self-forgetfulness, in which we have no preference of our own, but are most fully acquiescent in the divine will, we shall not only understand the high state of excellence which Balaam predicted for Israel,—“Lo, the people shall dwell alone,”—Numb. xxiii. 9, and of which we have an intimation by the prophet, “Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the Lord, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone,”—Jer. xlix. 31, but we shall also be prepared to perceive that when the Lord God saw it was not good for man to be longer alone, it is an indication that he was verging towards an inferior state, in which he wished to love something of his own, in connection with divine things.

This desire, not to remain in that highest, purest, state of celestial life, in which our will is as it were absorbed in our supreme regard for the divine will, induced a weariness of the felicities of inward love and wisdom, and a disposition towards the things of outward life, represented by the deep sleep into which Adam fell. Sleep is the symbol of a natural state, wakefulness of a spiritual state. Hence the kingdom of God is said in the Gospel to be like “a man that should cast seed in his ground, and should *sleep* and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.”—Mark iv. 26, 27. Alternation of state, the pursuit first of spiritual things, and then of natural things, is useful, if we follow each with a regard to true and proper use, “He giveth his beloved sleep.”—Ps. cxxvii. 2. But we should beware of becoming so much engrossed in things of earth, as to neglect and despise those of heaven. Our prayer should ever be, “Lighten thou mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.”—Ps. xiii. 3.

The external state, into which the people of the most ancient times came, is represented by a deep sleep. Divine Mercy watched over them still, and opened in them a religious condition, in which their self-hood was moderated and hallowed by

being blended with, and softened by heavenly affection. This is meant by forming the rib into a woman. It has been a vulgar idea that man has one rib fewer than woman has, but this is entirely unfounded. The rib is the symbol of selfhood, to which man inclined, in which there is little heavenly life, but which can be made truly religious, when man suffers himself to be led of the Divine Mercy to love the exalted things of heaven *as if* from himself, but yet adoringly acknowledges that the power to do so is from the Lord. This is a state to which we who are born in evil have to rise; hence it is said in the prophecy of Jeremiah, "Behold, I will create a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man,"—Jer. xxxi. 22; but to the primeval people, who had been in a better state, it was a descent.

This formation of selfhood, which is hard like a bone, into something angelic, by filling it with love from the Lord, is represented in other places in the Scriptures, by making bones to flourish and to live. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this . . . your bones shall flourish like an herb."—Isa. lxvi. 13, 14. "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."—Ezek. xxxvii. 4, 5. "All my bones shall say, Who is like unto thee?"

When the early people of the earth no longer wished to remain in the elevated condition of single and celestial dependence on the Divine Good, but were disposed to have somewhat of their own will in religion, the Lord permitted it, and so filled it with the graces of heaven, that from being like a hard bone, it became like a beautiful woman. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever."

We cannot leave this interesting part of the subject without intimating the clue it affords to the deep ground, in the wisdom of the Divine Creator, in which has originated the distinction of the human race into male and female: His perfect image below being formed, not by one sex, but by both. The essential male principle is truth and intellectual power, the essential feminine principle is affection for the truth, as manifested in the mind and life of man. Had both these been created in one being, the affection for truth would have been concentrated on his own truth, thus on himself, and have formed an intensely selfish being, vain of its own excellencies, hard as bone, against others. But by forming this affection into another being, the beautiful form of female softness and grace was produced, with the tendency to love man for the excellencies which are in him, from God.

“He for God only, she for God in him.” Thus by this beautiful arrangement of Infinite Wisdom, both are disposed to love what is out of themselves, and that principle of marriage union originated, round which cluster all the blessings and graces of wedded life, the blisses of home, and the orderly propagation and training of the human race.

We will once more return to the subject of man's fall, as we have now a ready and satisfactory means of arriving at the divine account of its important stages. We have already observed the departure from the highest state of order, and the adoption of a state in which selfhood was allowed some exercise, but moderated and softened by the spirit of heaven, and under the confession that it is from the Lord, that it has been raised to what is lovable and holy. We have now to consider the operation of the sensual principle, signified by the serpent upon the religious state signified by Eve, already blended with selfhood, and thus having a tendency to confide in its own strength. The serpent's speech is expressive of the tendency of the sensual principle to give importance to our own knowledge, and to have doubts of divine communications. Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? In this temptation, as in all temptation from the same principle now, and in this respect temptations at the present day, proceed from sensual desires, similarly with temptations in olden time, and they begin with the suggestion of doubt. *Hath* God said this? Are you sure He has so strictly required purity, honesty, virtue? Do you think He troubles Himself to notice you? Is there not, after all, some mode of gratifying your desires, and escaping from the consequences? Why should you not indulge every desire of your nature? Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

In the woman's reply a remarkable fact is to be noticed; she regards the tree of knowledge as in the midst of the garden, although as the Lord God arranged the garden, the tree of lives was in the midst (chap. ii. 9). She says, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”—Chap. iii. 3. In this declaration of the woman we have another change of state implied; she regarded the tree of knowledge, not the tree of lives, as the centre of all wisdom. When we have adopted our conclusions from the short-sighted appearances of sense, as being central truth, we are ripe for ruin, and such was the condition of the people represented by the divine record before us. There is an experience illustrative of this in the case of every one who

falls. If divine wisdom were firmly held to; if the tempted fled for refuge from their own clouded fancies, to the rock of ages, all would be well; but when they place the tree of their own knowledge in the centre of the mind, they find their fancied strength becomes the veriest weakness, and the issue is misery and death.

The serpent next becomes bolder. The sensual principle strengthens itself, and suggests, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." When we determine to act upon our own conceits, we deem ourselves singularly clever. We conclude we shall take no harm; we shall know how to elude all the dangers Divine Wisdom has predicted, and all the world shall see how successful shall be our projects. We shall no longer be hoodwinked; our eyes shall be opened, and we shall be as gods, shewing that we know how to secure, in our own way, and by our own strength, the goods of selfish and worldly success, and avoid the evils of adversity and want. We take then the fruit of the tree; it seems good, it seems pleasant. It is a tree to be desired to make one wise. We take it, but soon experience shews that this wisdom of the serpent is the curse of the soul. Alas! for such opening of the eyes as then takes place! A sense of weakness is soon unfolded; a sense of restlessness and loss; a sense of blame, and necessity for covering. We desire to excuse, and apologize. We cover ourselves with the fig-leaves of idle pretences that we had no power to do otherwise, although we forsook the guidance and the strength which were extended to save us. We have lost the bright day of former light and love; it has become evening, and we are cold and sad.

The sorrowful experience of those who turn from the paths of wisdom and peace, to follow the dreams of their short-sighted fancy, is accurately represented by the language of the eighth verse, spiritually understood: "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden." In the Hebrew; tree is in the singular. Our translators probably thought they could not hide in one tree, and therefore gave it as they considered the case required, "trees of the garden." But, the Hebrew is as it ought to be; it expresses the state into which man comes, when he chooses his own mistaken conceits, instead of the divine mode of being happy. The other trees of the garden, the perceptions of heavenly intelligence, disappear from him, and he has only his

one tree left. He hides himself in that as well as he can; he finds a poor covering, and he is condemned and unhappy. It is the cool of the day. The hour of reflection has come on. The merciful voice of the Almighty is perceived moving in the garden of his soul, and asking the important question, "Adam, where art thou?"

The strangest absurdities arise from supposing these words to be literally interpreted, but the most interesting lessons from their spiritual acceptation. Can any one conceive that the All-knowing needed to enquire after man in an earthly garden? Surely not. But He comes from His mercy into the conscience of every one, after sin. The question implies the divine impulse, leading the sinner to ask himself, "Man, where art thou?" Remember where thou wast. Thou hast been innocent, peaceful, and happy; how art thou now? Thou hadst once the sweet lessons of heavenly wisdom shining brightly within thee; these are all obscured and fled. "Man, where art thou?" Thou hadst once a loving sense of the presence of thy Heavenly Father, a holy confidence in His law, a full prospect of His kingdom. Now, where art thou? Hiding, flying, from having placed a serpent where the All-wise should be, and taken its miserable delusions, instead of the counsels of the Most High. "Man, where art thou?"

To all of us, there are seasons when this same scrutinizing but merciful visitor comes. We have had our falls, and from the suggestions of the same serpent, the love of sensual pleasure over those of eternity; and then we hear in the recesses of the conscience, the divine voice, enquiring, "Man, where art thou?" Oh! let us be led by it to ponder over our state, to look up to our Father whom we have left, as our Saviour, who alone can redeem us. "Thou, O Jehovah, art our Father, our Redeemer: thy name is from everlasting."—Isa. lxiii. 16.

The spiritual view of the history of man's fall, not only relieves us from the difficulties which have been so strongly felt as to confirm many in their opposition to the Bible as the Word of God, but it throws a light over all that is said of serpents in the early records of other nations than the Jews, and in their religious usages. Among the Egyptians, it is said by Kircher, the serpent was the emblem of subtlety and cunning, and also of lust and sensual pleasure. They likewise represented the great god Kneph, the author of all good, by this form of a serpent. The sensual degree of the mind, including the senses and the passions, or affections connected with the senses, is a mass of lust and cunning, if separated from the higher principles of justice, judg-

ment, faith and love ; or it is the source of every outward blessing, when submissive to the will and the wisdom of the Lord. Hence, as the god Kneph, it was the emblem of the source good, as the god Typhon, of the embodiment of evil.

In Greece, the serpent was represented as drawing the car of Ceres, the goddess of abundance ; and being wound round the staff of Mercury, the messenger of the gods to men, and as waiting at the feet of Esculapius the god of healing : thus representing, that earnest love of work which brings plenty upon earth ; that accurate observation which enables wisdom to exercise power upon earth, and that ability of promoting or restoring health, which is the attendant of a practical attention to the laws of God, in outward nature. The serpents which are seen to hiss from the girdles of the furies, are the symbols of the sensual passions, lawless and fierce, devouring their possessors, and breathing hate, defiance and cruelty against others. The hydra-headed serpent which Hercules could not slay so long as it touched the earth, and which prevented his entrance into the garden of bliss, is the symbol of selfish and sensual love which can only be overcome, by preventing its flowing into practice. Sin must be resisted by us from going into act ; we must not let it touch the earth, and the Lord will destroy the life and delight of it, within the soul.

In India, the serpent as good, is represented as bearing the sleeping Vischnu on the Sea of Milk ; as bad, being rendered helpless and having its head bruised beneath the foot of the god of Love and Salvation, Chrishna. The sensual degree of the soul, in order, is the support, in the world, of interior wisdom ; when overweening, and desirous of ruling alone in man, it must be crushed and subdued. In Persia, it was the symbol of Ahriman, the evil principle : in China, of the Circumspection, by which the Tien-hoangs, the Kings of Heaven, and the Ti-lings, the Monarchs of Earth, rule. Every where is the double character of the sensual degree of the mind, as subordinate to the laws of religion, or as being allowed to resist them, presented to us by the symbol of the serpent, as good, or as evil.

The brazen serpent, which was lifted up in the wilderness for the healing of those who had been bitten by the fiery, flying serpents, was the symbol of the humanity of our blessed Lord, which was perfected by suffering, and so sanctified, as to become the source of salvation to all who look to God, in Him.

Who is there of us who has not been bitten by the fiery serpents ? Who has not suffered from inflamed passions ; from inordinate desires ; from indulging the earthly, instead of re-

straining it by the heavenly part of our natures? What a message of comfort it is to know, that He who has glorified His own human nature, will give us power to subdue ours, and restore them to order! "Behold, I give unto you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."—Luke x. 19. The great fact for us to learn, is, that as soon as man fell, and throughout the subsequent progress of the human race, children were born in the image of their parents. Of Adam, it is said he was made in the likeness of God (Gen. vi. 1). But after the fall, it is written, he begat a son in his own likeness, after his image (ver. 3). It could not be otherwise: Divine Wisdom has linked the race together, as connected parts of one great whole. What parents cherish, is therefore transmitted with the rest of their being, in embryo, to their children. When the order of the mind was distorted, then, sensual things, although right in their place, were allowed to engross the chief authority in the soul, and to rule where they ought to serve, disturbing and dislocating the whole mind. This disordered nature was transmitted to children; hence the divided and broken condition of the human mind,—the proneness, which we all feel, to give undue importance to things of sense. The origin of evil was not the introduction of a new principle into human nature; it was only displacing the principles which were already there, and were all good, in their proper order. Natural evil, is not anything original: it is but the exaggeration, or displacement, of what is otherwise good. Fire is a good thing as a servant, but bad as a master: water is excellent as rain, or in a river, but bad as a flood: every power of the human mind and body is good in its place and proportion, but each one becomes an evil when unduly exalted. When the senses, and the passions of the lowest degree of the soul, were raised to undue importance, and the higher and holier principles of the soul were first neglected, and then despised and disbelieved, this constituted the fall, and it was a real and a fearful fall,—the higher principles of love to God and man were thrown down, and made to serve. The life's business, of man now, is to reverse this, and thus rise again, by power from the Great Serpent-bruiser—the Lord Jesus Christ. Our serpents—our sensual principles, are now too fearfully impure, and too strong for us. He will give us power, however, to tread upon them. It is hard for us, at first, to resist our proneness to place the pleasures of time before the purities of eternity, the desires of the flesh above the principles of the spirit; but if we look to Him, the Divine and Perfect Man,

virtue will go out from Him, and we shall be saved. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." He will enable us to deny ourselves and all our faculties, and follow Him. By His power we shall not only subdue the sensual things of our nature, but they will be regenerated, filled with new heavenly life. We shall first tread upon the serpent, and then take it up, and join it to what is heavenly. "These signs," our blessed Lord says, "shall follow them that believe; they shall take up serpents."—Mark xvi. 18.

When we have thus struggled, and by the aid of the Captain of salvation conquered, in the conflicts of the regeneration, the fall will be reversed in us; the love of God and man, wisdom and faith, peace and happiness, will be restored to us. We shall realize those gracious words of the divine promise, and have paradise and the tree of life once more. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."—Rev. ii. 7.

Feeling the loss of mankind, by separation from the source of all happiness, wisdom, and peace; feeling our own personal want of the divine Deliverer from sin and sorrow; let us lift our eyes and hearts to our only Saviour, and in the language of Milton say,

"Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter; and begin to save mankind."

SERMON IV.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

“And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and silime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”—Gen. xi. 3, 4.

LIKE the garden of Eden, the Tower of Babel has been a puzzle to geographers who look to the literal sense of the Bible alone. They have sought for its remains in different regions, but with most unsatisfactory results. The sum of these results is thus stated by Dr. Kitto, himself a literalist:—“After the lapse of so many centuries, and the occurrence in the land of Shinar of so many revolutions, it is not to be expected that the identification of the Tower of Babel with any actual ruin should be easy, or tend to any very certain result.”

The mound styled Birs Nimrod, on the west of the Euphrates, about six miles from Hillah, has been a favorite spot with those who have wished to find the ruins of the Tower of Babel somewhere, yet it is much more clearly ascertained that these are the ruins of the Temple of the Sun. It has been surmised that Nebuchadnezzar selected the ruins of Babel, and finished them, to become the Temple of Belus, or the Sun. But even this is contrary to probability. To suppose that a great eastern monarch should select an accursed ruin, to make it into a temple of his God, indicates a want of appreciation of the sentiments which usually prevail among men, especially among eastern men. They would shun an abhorred spot even for their common dwellings, and much more for what they believed to be a sanctuary for their gods. Besides, this ruin is a building of brick, 37 feet high, and 28 feet broad. What a profane idea does it give of God, to suppose that the erection of such a pile, caused Him to come down from heaven to see what the men were doing, and stop their proceeding by a miracle! Who can explain why

such a structure should cause alarm, and the pyramids, so much more immense, be constructed in divine indifference?

If the sacred writings had only represented the people as designing to reach heaven by a tower, it would have been difficult for rational belief; but when it proceeds to state that the Deity came down and felt it necessary to stop their efforts by rendering them unintelligible to each other, surely it must induce every thoughtful person to say this cannot be literal, this must have another signification. What! come down to see, because these men were building something not half so large as many a chimney in Great Britain, and perform a miracle to prevent them from thus reaching heaven?

But, it must not be forgotten, that if the ages of these early personages were the ages of individuals, (and not, as they really were, descriptive of communities, called by single names, as Israel was for more than a thousand years,) then Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, must have been among these people. They had come down from the mighty Ararat, more than three miles high. Could they have so childish a conceit as that they could reach heaven by a brick building, in a plain or a valley, when they had not found it in the regions of perpetual snow? Surely, if its forming a part of that primeval history, which we have seen in relation to the other great subjects, can only be allegorically or spiritually understood, did not lead us to a spiritual sense, the inevitable difficulties of the letter, in this instance alone, would lead us to look for some higher, some interior meaning.

Besides, if the history be a literal one, what is its moral? What is it to teach? That men were not to build large erections?—thousands far larger have been built since, without interference. That men are not to build, to make themselves a name?—it is equally wrong to do anything else for vain glory, and yet there is no especial interference of the Almighty. That men are not to try to reach heaven by earthly buildings?—if that were necessary to be learned, much better let them build on; so insane a project would soon cure itself. In this case, as in the others we have treated, we must say to the Biblical student, "Come up higher, friend."

We have mentioned that, like the site of Eden, the position of this Tower has greatly perplexed the curious. It is like Eden with its Tree of Lives, in another respect. Paradise has a leading position at the beginning of the Bible, and we find it again in the last book, Rev. ii. 7; xxii. 2. It is thus represented as the blissful state from which men fell, and as that which by regeneration they will again attain. In both, a spiritual blessing, not

a natural place. So with Babel, it is here as the symbol of pride, building up superstition, to scale heaven its own way. It is the same in the Book of Revelation. There, Babylon the great, is the symbol of a selfish and superstitious church, a prostitution of religion by mysterious doctrines and priestly craft to the awful purpose of lording it over men's souls, as well as their bodies. No one supposes that Babylon in the Book of Revelation means an earthly city, why then assign that meaning, so replete with obscurity, to Babel here?

Let us turn now to the same history as opened by the divine science of correspondence, or analogy. The whole earth is said to be of one language, and of one speech. The earth, as in all other cases, means the church, especially as to its external principles, worship, and practice. It is that earth which is called upon by the prophet, when he said, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." In it, is the ground in which the seed of the Word of God is sown. The earth at this time is said to have had one language, and the speech one, or as the latter part may be rendered, *the words united, or made one* (Debarim echadim). Because, the church is represented in a state of charity and harmony. Where love rules, there unity prevails. Even, if doctrines differ, kindness can find sentiments sufficiently in common, to harmonize men's minds. Where charity prevails, diversity of view does not produce discord, but only makes beauty in variety. The ideas may be varied, but the spirit may be the same, under all the forms. The language in such case is one, and the words are in unison. If a spirit of love prevailed, varying forms of faith would not repel, nor divide men, but rather lead each to seek the others, and to help them. Love is a golden bond, around which all true thoughts, like pearls, will gem themselves. It harmonizes them; it fulfils the law; it is a fire that melts into one, metals which hold each other off, when cold, and what is too impure, it removes, in dross, or in vapour. The members of the human body are wonderfully varied in form, but the heart harmonizes them, and sends the living blood to each. In their variety, the warm fluid produces unity and health. When love animates and directs them, the tone of all and of each, is directed to the production of use. Their language is one, and their words one.

Such a state of feeling is represented in the opening terms of this divine description. It is characteristic of a church at its commencement. The sentiment of its members is harmonious, and their expressions tend to the good of all.

But we are informed these people went from the east, and

they found a plain, (or valley,) in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there.

The east, in the divine language, is the symbol of a state of love to the Lord, because, in such a state of the heart, the Sun of righteousness, the Sun of the soul, arises, and gives its beams of light and warmth over the mind. Eden is said to be eastward (Gen. ii. 8). The glory of the God of Israel, came to the representation of the spiritual temple, seen by the prophet Ezekiel, by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east (Ezek. xliii. 4), and such is ever the case. Only when the heart from a spirit of love turns to the Lord, does He pour forth the beams of His grace and glory, from the chambers of the east. He was ever shining there, for His love is always the same; but He seems to turn to us, when we really turn to Him.

But the people of whom we are now speaking, went from the east, and found a plain, or more properly translated, a small valley, in the land of Shinar. The word (Beka) translated plain, ought rather, according to Parkhurst and Furst, to be rendered a break, or gorge, or small, broken valley. The word Shinar, means Lionland.

Valleys are the symbols of the lower affections of the soul, and mountains of the higher. Hence we read of the "valley of bones" (Ezek. xxxvii. 1), which the prophet addressed, and which symbolized the natural mind, full of the skeletons of religious teaching, long uncared for. The Psalmist blesses those who passing through the valley of Baca, (or weeping,) make it a well; or, in other words, who are brought into troubles and sorrow externally, but make these the means of opening in themselves that well of salvation, whose bright waters sparkle with hope and consolation—that water of truth, which springs up for ever, to quench the thirst of the faithful soul (John vii. 37, 38).

When the effect of the Lord's coming into the world was predicted (Isa. xl. 3), it was said, "Every valley shall be exalted," to hold out the glorious promise that those who were in low and external states, on account of the depressing influence of the powers of darkness, and the want of heavenly light, should be enabled to rise into states of devotion, love, and holy joy. The mountains are said to bring peace (Ps. lxxii.), because they are, in their stillness, their grandeur, and their elevation, the representatives of those interior heights of the soul, in which adoration, gratitude, deep devotion, and holy trust in our Saviour, have their abode. In the latter days it is prophesied (Isa. ii. 2), the mountain of the Lord's house shall be at the top of the mountain; and again, the mountains shall run down with new

wine (Joel iii. 18). The meaning of these and many similar uses of the term mountain, is manifest, when we see its significance to be a high state of love in the soul.

When those to whom our text relates, are described as coming into a little broken valley, in the lion-land, and dwelling there, it is to intimate that they had departed from their first love, and sunk into low and carnal states, in which they rejected all real high principles, all real goodness, which is the only real greatness, and boldly determined to make a religion for themselves, outwardly of the same appearance as before, but inwardly devoted to their own glorification, and to the gratification of spiritual pride. This is to leave the glorious mountains of the east, and to dwell in a little broken valley of our own, in the land of the lions, or Shinar. "My soul is among lions," David said, "and I lie among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."—Ps. lvii. 4. He no doubt was strongly infested, by temptations from those who rejected all virtue, and all true wisdom, and boldly followed the diabolical impulses of pride and ambition. He felt the bitterness of dwelling in the land of the lions.

Such, then, are the indications given in the divine volume of the states of those who proceeded to build the Tower of Babel; but let us consider the materials they used, and their whole mode of operation.

And they said, "Let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." In this speech there is manifestly displayed the spirit of ostentatious pride, and an utter want of trust in the providence and ways of the Lord.

"Let us build a city, and tower whose top may reach heaven, and make us a name." What a burst of arrogance and self-sufficiency is here. "Let us build a city," let us construct a system of doctrine, let us make a church. The true church of the Lord is a city which comes down from heaven, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."—Heb. xii. 22. It is the city of truth.—(Zech. viii.) The strong city which hath the salvation which God hath appointed for walls and bulwarks, and of which it is said: "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."—Isa. xxvi. 1, 2. It is a city of defence for the soul, and thrice happy are they who walk in its holy light, and delight themselves in its golden street, and peerless and pearly abodes. But when men say, "Let

us build a city," it is an indication of their determination to have a system of their own. Unsatisfied with the calm, simple grandeur of the divine law, "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God,"—"If ye would enter into life, keep the commandments,"—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me,"—the conceits of human self-derived intelligence, are active to contrive a mode of teaching that may spare their sins, and yet warrant their salvation. "Let us build a city," let us contrive a scheme, say they, which shall profess to honour God, and save souls, but which shall really "make us a name." Let us seek influence with all our might. Let us teach men that we are the mediators between them and God. We will induce the Deity to be propitious. We will forgive them their sins. We will teach them a way to be saved, although they cling to evil, and despise such of the divine commands, as interfere with their sins.

They not only determined to build a city, but also a tower. The city, as we have seen, was a religion perverted to their self-idolization; a tower in it, represents the arrogant claims of self-love in such a church. True religion is represented by the Lord as a vineyard hedged round, with a winepress and a tower in it.—Matt. xxi. 33. Because the tower in such case means the elevated thought of spiritually-minded men, but the tower man builds from pride and self-confidence, is the ambitious claim to be revered by all. When men prostitute religion to foster their insane pride, there is no demand too haughty for them to make. They arrogate the powers of Deity. An offence against them, is an offence against God. A crime against the divine laws is with them very light, but an offence against their dignity, or even their opinions, is sure to bring down the heaviest excommunication. Ambition is terrible at all times; it is the fruitful parent of wars, and tears, and woes innumerable; but ambition in priests, is a plague which spreads itself throughout society, and poisons the very springs of blessing. The servants of the lowliest, become the insanest examples of haughtiness. They pretend their power reaches to heaven; they have the keys of the celestial gates, and can refuse admission to those who refuse them servility; as if heaven could be opened to aught but heavenly-mindedness, or closed by aught but sin. They parade their idle pretensions, dignify themselves with great names and extravagant titles, and presume to deck themselves with the attributes of God, to impose upon unthinking and unenlightened men. Such has been the towering pride of Rome, the Babylon of the Revelation, and such was Babel in the land of Shinar.

The Divine Word denounces all such arrogance. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one who is proud and lofty, and upon every one who is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And upon every *high tower* and upon every fenced wall."—Isa. ii. 11, 12, 15. The ministers of true religion, imitate Him who was the servant of all; they say, Blessed are the meek. They point to their Master who said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and they that are great, exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you. Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." "Love one another." "By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." Such is the language of a true servant of the Lord Jesus; but the priests of a selfish system ever cry, "Let us build us a tower, and make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." As if their insane claims, could be a better protection than the wall of fire which Divine Love places around the humble, who trust in Him. Far, far be it from us, brethren, to suppose we need any self-derived aggrandizement, or defence.

"Safe is the man, my God, who flies
To thee, when storms and dangers rise.
He, from his inmost soul's retreat,
Shall mark the awful tempest beat,
And feel thy hand, in mercy spread
Its guardian shadow o'er his head."

Let us now mark the materials which these Babel-builders used. "And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

Stone, as a natural production affording a strong foundation, and the material for firm and solid walls, corresponds to divine truth; *brick*, as a human manufacture, and a substitute for stone, is the symbol of opinions fabricated by man's contrivance.

God, as being essential truth itself, is called the Rock of Israel (2 Sam. xxiii. 3). The Rock and Fortress (Ps. xviii. 2). The stone which the builders refused, which became the headstone of the corner (Ps. cxviii. 22). The foundation truth, which is a correct faith in the Lord as the only Saviour, is the stone which the prophet refers to when he announces to the people, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone,

a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste."—Isa. xxviii. 16. "For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—Cor. iii. 11. He who builds his hopes, his prospects and his principles upon this truth, builds upon a rock, and that Rock is Christ. "Whosoever," says the Lord, "heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock."—Matt. vii. 24. When Simon the apostle uttered the truth that the Lord's Humanity was divine, "the Son of the living God," the blessed Saviour called him Peter, the rock-man, and said, "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matt. xvi. 18. Peter was the representative of every man, who in heart receives this fundamental truth. Every such man, becomes also a Peter or rock-man. In him the Lord builds his church, and the gates of hell can never prevail against it. To him, as he reads the Word, the Lord gives the keys of heavenly knowledge, which open to him angelic states. What vices he binds in his life, the Lord binds in his spirit. What virtues he looses in his conduct, the Lord looses in his inmost soul. Such is the meaning, the value and the power, of the stones of divine truth. Interior truths are precious stones, and "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—Matt. xiii. 45, 46. But the truths of heaven, common or precious, all teach humble, holy love to God and man, displayed in a just and pure life, as the essence of all religion. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; this is the law and the prophets."—Matt. vii. 12. True religion has nothing in it conducive to priestly pomp, or hierarchal splendour. It elevates principles, not persons. It leads men to God, and to the adoption of his divine laws for their government, not to outward show, and sacerdotal parade. It proclaims the infallibility of principles, the eternity of right, and calls upon all men to adopt these in love, and follow them in life, as the only means to be happy. But these truths will not serve the purpose of Babel-builders, so they make materials of their own, *brick* have they for *stone*.

The false principles engendered by spiritual pride, which elevate man, in the place of God, and substitute unintelligible mummery in worship, instead of enlightened adoration, are aptly represented by brick, which the builders make themselves. Where, for instance, could the paraphernalia of superstitious religion—consecrated ground, holy water, Digitized by Google sainted bones, and

rag, the worship of dead and living men, high-sounding names—his holiness, father in God, right reverend father in God, and such like pompous titles applied to mortals quite as frail and feeble as others, be obtained, unless they had made them themselves? The stones of divine truth would not do, and so they made brick. The whole of the persuasions which tend to the exaltation of priestly pride, are bricks of human contrivance, substituted for the stones of a true spiritual building.

They said also, Let us burn them thoroughly. Fire is the symbol of ardent affection. Heavenly fire is the affection to do good (Ps. civ. 4). The fire of hell is the affection or lust for doing evil (Isa. ix. 18; James iii. 6). The fire which burned these bricks was the intense desire for power over men's souls, which produces zeal for self, not for God. It is amazing with what ardour the lust of spiritual dominion will work. It will compass sea and land to make a proselyte. It will both do and suffer much more than true religion requires, to accomplish its insane ends. It will madly rush on, trampling upon all laws divine and human, if haply its system may triumph. That it may turn this lovely earth into a field of blood, scatter all tender human ties, destroy millions of God's children, ruin cities, depopulate nations, is nothing, if its proud claims may but triumph. Nay, so fanatical does he become, who blends the lust of power and the profession of religion together, that he will often give his own body to be burned, but yet not have Christian love or charity (1 Cor. xiii. 3). Such zeal for false principles, is operative in their formation and propagation, when men say in spirit, "Let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." Not only had they brick for stone, but *slime* had they for *mortar*.

When truths are the stones, the love of truth is the cement, which unites them firmly together. Truths, without love, are like stones without mortar, loose, and devoid of strength. However much a man knows, if he lacks the love of the truth, he has no saving strength in the sight of heaven. But the uniting principle among Babel-builders is merely the lust of being worshipped by others, and is therefore described by slime. Nothing is so unclean, as the love of self in its varied forms. It spurns the chaste delights of marriage, and longs to wallow in the impurities of adultery. Out of the evil heart, comes all that really defiles a man. Nothing is so unclean, as those worse than Augean stables, the secret recesses of the bad man's soul. He gloats on polluted fancies, and foul thoughts. His sentiments revel in corruption. His dreams reek with defilement. From such a state the Psalmist rejoiced to be delivered: "He brought me up also

out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."—Ps. xl. 2. The defiled condition of the wicked is alluded to, when their perpetual misery is described in that awful sentence, He that is filthy, shall be filthy still (Revelation, chap. xxii.) The impurity of the lust of power, from which a selfish Babylonish system is held together, is here called slime. In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, when false prophets seduced the people, as they do in all ages, by offering salvation on other terms than loving goodness, believing truth and obeying God's commandments, the prophet said, "Because, even because, they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar, say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall."—Ezek. xiii. 10, 11. The wall, like the tower, is a system of falsehood; the untempered mortar, like the slime, means the impure affections which sustain it.

How diligently the labourers work at their tower. They teach, they preach, they indoctrinate, they counsel. They parade their mysterious powers, they decry reason, they insinuate that science is of very doubtful character. Religion is an awful mystery, and they are its only expounders. The people would certainly destroy themselves, if they ventured to investigate and decide for themselves. Pray and pay, are enough for the people. They are the authorized mediators between the Deity and man, armed with awful powers. He who serves and obeys them, is sure of Paradise though never so negligent; he who does not follow their doctrine, will be eternally ruined, though ever so faithful to God's commands. They labour diligently, and among a simple and ignorant people they labour successfully; and were it not that Divine Providence watches over human well-being, nothing would be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Happily, however, He who keepeth Israel never sleeps, and He comes down to see the city and the tower.

The Lord is said to see, when He makes it manifest to His creatures, that He sees. Undoubtedly, He who fills heaven and earth, is present everywhere, and knows all things. But, when He manifests Himself to man, He seems to come down to him, and when He shews that He knows, it appears to us that He then first observes. It is in this way, the Lord is said to have come down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

He is divinely careful of human freedom, and human progress. And, when a system, fraught with peril to both, has pro-

ceeded so far as fully to unfold its noxious character, then is the time for Infinite Goodness to act. Midnight has come over the mind, and it is time to commence the morning. Man's necessity is God's opportunity. The hour of judgment sounds. God reveals His light to some minds, capable of better things, and His truth flashes conviction. The tower of superstition totters. Men feel that God is there. He has come down to their states, and they see, as it were, His lightning striking their lofty structures, and hurling them to the dust.

The eyes of the Lord, are the wisdom of the Lord. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."—Prov. xv. 3. The wheels of Divine Providence are said to be full of eyes (Ezek. i. 18), because all their movements manifest the most perfect wisdom. When that wisdom is displayed, in defeating the machinations of the evil, the eyes of the Lord are described as going to and fro in the earth (Zech. iv. 10). It is thus that the Lord is said in the sacred narrative, to come down to see. The fulness of time has come. The tower of spiritual pride, is completely ripe for judgment; the safety of the human race, demands its overthrow. The divine wisdom selects suitable minds, and directs them to its contemplation; opening their eyes to its monstrosity. This operation on the part of Divine Providence, is intimated by the words, Let us go down, and see. The Divine Mind, acting through free agents, expresses itself by "Let us," the low and mean character of the lust of power, as, far beneath all that is heavenly, is intimated by "Let us go down;" and the revelation to men of the baselessness of all arrogance of man towards man, and the determination of heaven to defeat it, is intimated by "Let us there confound their language."

We cannot have a more perfect illustration of all this sacred narrative, than is afforded by the history of the papal power, and its overthrow by the agency of the reformers.

From the time of the council of Nice, when they left the true foundation of the church, the acknowledgment of all the fulness of the Godhead being bodily in the One Divine Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the leaders of the church began to build with bricks of their own making. They invented three divine persons, as Kings in heaven, and one semi-divine person as Queen. All sorts of impostures, in writings, in stories of miracles, in relics, and wonders of every kind, were produced and diligently propagated. The ignorance of the laity presented the most favorable field for operation, and burning zeal gave energy to the inventors and proclaimers of pious frauds. They made

bricks, and they burnt them thoroughly. The manufacture of holy lies went on apace, century after century; if opposition raised its voice, it was hunted down as irreligious. The slimy lust of temporal power, and wealth, and pleasure, by spiritual means, held the bricks of falsehood together, and the city of lies extended, and the tower of haughtiness grew, and reared its head to heaven. The popes claimed all power, divine and human. They set up kings, or threw them down at pleasure. They gave away kingdoms at their caprice. They excused and pandered to vice, but made it profitable. Any sin was passed over in the authorities of the earth, if the power of the holy see were but protected and extended. A system foreign to the simple purity, and the intelligent holiness of real Christianity spread itself over Christendom, and gaudy ceremonies thinly veiled essential heathenism. D'Aubigne says, "Morals and doctrine were alike poisoned, and both needed a mighty regeneration. The more the value attached to the outward works, the farther off was sanctification of the heart; dead ordinances had been substituted everywhere for Christian life, and there had sprung up that strange but natural union of the most scandalous debauchery, with the most superstitious devotion. Theft had been practised before the altar; seduction in the confessional; poison had been administered in the mass; adultery had been committed at the foot of the cross. Superstition, by destroying doctrine, had destroyed morality." The tower of pride, a second Babel, was again erected; and its adherents hoped it would last for ever, it would never "be scattered over the face of the earth." Every abomination was practised in it,—legalized in it for a certain sum. The essentially infernal nature of sin was lost sight of, and for a consideration, heaven could easily be had without virtue. The dignitaries of religion, were monsters of lust and rapine, were bravos in surplices, yet still the builders went on with their towers, and thought in their hearts, "We will ascend into heaven, we will exalt our throne above the stars of God; we will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. We will ascend above the heights of the clouds; we will be like the most High."—Isaiah xiv. 13, 14. But the time of judgment came. When least expected, the divine light broke upon the minds of Luther and others. The Word was taken from its dusty repositories, and the Divine Wisdom said, "Let us see the tower, and the city which the children of men have builded." The lightning of divine truth struck it again and again; down fell battlement and buttresses. Here lay a portion, and there. The whole pile became a ruin, and so remains.

It is supposed to be of some little use to despotism, and for this mean service it obtains yet permission to seem to be. "It has a name that it lives, but it is dead."

The confounding of the languages, represents the different doctrines which arise, when a spiritual despotism is exposed and overthrown. The system in which men have apathetically trusted, having been shewn to be fictitious, and hurled down, its former adherents know scarcely what to do. They are thrown upon their own resources, and those resources are most scanty. They have been trained in lies, and the rational faculty, the true servant and representative of divine truth in the soul, has been systematically neglected, or crushed. The unregenerate heart, that most fruitful source of malignant error, has been unpurified by the sacred streams of heavenly wisdom, and it mixes itself largely in the general turmoil, and the result is confusion, which the word Babel in Hebrew means. They do not understand each other's doctrines, they oppose and fly from each other. They are no longer united for despotism, nor are they united at all. The tyranny of the priesthood is broken; but innumerable sects are formed. In the turmoil of the universal fray, different nations seize upon different dogmas, and form them into separate churches. The wildest notions are taken up, some by one party, some by another. The whole structure is broken down into fragments, each land holding a language, a doctrine of its own, and excommunicating the others. Such was the Babel of modern times, and such was that of the ancients, represented in the Babel before us.

Luther, when describing the state of things after the papal power had been arrested and so rudely shaken by his assaults, says: "Wherever the Word of God has made itself heard, and God has brought together a band of the faithful, the devil has quickly perceived the divine ray, and has begun to chafe, and blow, and raise tempests from every quarter. . . . I hold that I myself (let alone the ancients) have undergone more than twenty hurricanes, twenty different assaults of the devil. First I had the Papists against me. Every one knows, I suppose, pretty nearly, how many tempests of books and of bulls the devil has through them, hurled against me, and in what a terrible manner they have devoured and torn me to pieces. It is true that I sometimes blew gently, though, against them, but it was no good; they were the more irritated, and blew again more violently, vomiting forth flames and fire. It has been so without interruption to this present hour. I had begun to hope for a

calm from these outbreaks of the devil, when he made a fresh attack through Múnzer and his revolt, which failed, though, to extinguish the light. Christ Himself healed that breach when, lo! in the person of Carlstadt, he came and broke my window-panes. There he was, bellowing and storming, so that I thought he was come to put out light, wax and tinder at once; but God was at hand to aid His poor little light; nor would He permit it to be extinguished. Then came the Sacramentarians and the Anabaptists, who broke open doors and windows to put out this light. Again it was in great danger, but thanks be to God, their spite was again disappointed. Others, again, have raged against the old masters, against the Pope and Luther all at once."

Regarded in this light, the history of the Tower of Babel, is deeply interesting, for all time. Viewed only as to the letter, it is a childish story, incredible to a considerate mind, scarcely having a perceptible moral. In the spirit, however, it is eminently important. The tendency to selfish rule, inherent in all men, displays itself most fearfully when it assumes a religious form. In a wide-spread community, where the doctrines and the sentiments are the same, it may accomplish incalculable mischiefs. It has done so again and again. It puts forward its schemes and fallacies; it pursues them with furious zeal; it persecutes those who oppose; it pants and hopes for universal success, but what is the end thereof? The time is sure to come, when Divine Mercy will interfere to save the human race, and "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen," will again be cried. Of all evils, the lust of power is the subtlest, and the most terribly seductive; yet it is the insanest, and the emptiest of results. What but the merest phantasy, can be the delight of dictating to others, and filching from them their freedom?

The foes of the freedom of others are ever the destroyers of their own. Alexander, hurried madly on, gnawed by the rage for fresh conquests, with no rest, pushing everything to extremes, destroying his friend in one drunken debauch, and himself at the age of thirty, in another, is a terrible illustration of the lust of power. Napoleon, after keeping Europe in turmoil, for twenty years, making homes, by millions, the abodes of woe, and then pining for years on the distant rock of the Atlantic, his insatiable lust for dominion had necessitated for his prison, is once more a spectacle of the same crime, and its punishment. The Russian despot, master of sixty millions, instead of struggling against this passion in himself, must make his one step more, lighting up the horrors of war, leading to the destruction of half a million of people, and so increasing his own anxieties and his violence, as to send

him sadly down to a premature grave. The same spirit is shewn in ecclesiastical history as the demon of discord, transforming the ministers of the Prince of Peace, into fomenters of persecution, founders of inquisitions, harassers of the world. Oh, how opposite to the nature of religion is all this! Who was so lowly as the Highest of all? He washed His disciples' feet,—He was the Servant of all,—He breathed mercy and forgiveness towards His murderers,—His religion is the religion of love, and "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." The true disciples of the Saviour seek to promote freedom in all things, not to grasp power. They labour to make men enlightened to know their rights and free to practise them. They seek to subdue selfishness in their own bosoms, not to stretch its influence over others. They know that, if they would follow the Lord, they must deny themselves, and take up the cross. They know, too, that if this cross is worthily borne, it will surely have its crown. They see in all experience, the punishment of selfishness written, but they know and feel its evil nature in themselves so truly, that they abhor the principle more than the punishment. It is the serpent, upon which they tread. It is the essence of Hell. The victory over it, prepares in each breast, for the reign of wisdom, love, and good to others, and these make heaven. How much more blessed it is to give, to promote the well-being, the freedom and happiness of others. The Lord creates all to be free. He gives His blessing freely, and is Himself unseen, lest man should be dazzled by His majesty. His sun rises, and diffuses its glorious beams over the earth, in silence. His heat softly and secretly insinuates itself into all things, elevating the juices of vegetation, and unfolding leaves, and flowers, and fruits, but the hand that guides the whole is unseen. The Creator, like the Saviour, is a God hiding Himself (Isa. xlv. 15). His Word makes man free. The more truth he receives, the more free he is (John viii. 32). The power of truth is intended to redeem us from the bondage of our evils and passions, and lead us to triumph even over ourselves, and make us free indeed. Why, then, should any of us seek to enslave our fellow men?

O let us ever guard against any of these insane attempts. Why need we build a city with our bricks, when the Lord has given us one from heaven, with a street of gold, clear as crystal, and garnished with all manner of precious stones?

Why should we go into our valley, and build our tower, when we may ascend, by purifying our hearts, into the Lord's house at the top of the mountains of celestial love, and there have the balmiest atmosphere, and the most magnificent pros-

pects. Oh! let the language of our hearts, and our prayers ever be, Lord make us truly free ourselves, and true but humble promoters of real freedom, real wisdom, real progress amongst all around us! We will build no city, nor tower, for ourselves; we will enter into the city Thou hast given, Thy new, Thy heavenly Jerusalem.

"Here will we take our joyful rest,
Nor e'er from Salem roam;
For ever and for ever blest,
In this our happy home."

SERMON V.

MANNA.

"And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is Manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."—Ex. xvi. 15.

IN the discourses which have preceded this, we have shewn the Divine Wisdom as it was conveyed in the allegorical language of those early people who lived before the times of history. With Abraham, a race of another genius, arose. The Jews were a people with no taste for spiritual things. The veil was upon their eyes and their hearts, and they walked in the oldness of the letter. To them, then, Divine Wisdom shrouded itself in facts, which transpired before their eyes, and in real history; so ordered, nevertheless, as to be a shadow of good things to come. The history of Abraham was real, and yet it was an allegory (Gal. iv. 24). All things, with the Israelites, were outwardly seen as they are described, and outwardly done, yet were they figures of the true (Heb. xi. 24). Divine Providence arranged the affairs of ancient Israel, so as to contain lessons of highest wisdom; for the new Israel, the church of God, in every age. This is so manifestly taught in the New Testament as to be commonly admitted by Christians as a general fact. Our aim is now to illustrate that great principle, and bring out of the storehouse of the Divine Word—the treasury of heavenly wisdom—some of those spiritual lessons which it contains alike in every part, whether parable, history, or prophecy, and which constitute its peculiar divine character as God's Book,—a work infinitely above all human compositions. The journey of the Israelites was a series of types portraying the regenerate life of the Christian. With all its incidents, its changes, its trials, and deliverances, the events in our religious experience are foreshadowed. Egypt, with its science and its slavery, was the symbol of that carnal, worldly, condition of the soul, in which it is by nature. Dis-

tinguished it may be for talent, for learning, for philosophy, for accomplishments, for gifts of manifold excellency, but all subject to a false and self-seeking worldliness that dreams but of earthly glory, sensual pleasures, and temporal gratifications,—which has no ends in heaven, but whatever be the projects it pursues,

“The trail of the serpent is over them all.”

Such was Jerusalem when there the Lord was rejected. Hence it is written: “The great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”—Rev. xi. 8. Science and worldliness combined, with every good principle which our heavenly Father may have implanted in the soul held captive, sighing for deliverance, are represented by Egypt, when Israel was in bondage there.

The boastful pretensions of Egypt, as referred to often in the Holy Scriptures, are accurately descriptive of the vanity of the learned, but selfish man. “Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.”—Ezek. xxix. 3. When the Pharaoh to whom Moses was sent disdainfully asked, “Who is the Lord, that I should serve him?” he did but what, in his secret soul, is done by every unregenerate man. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. xiv. 1), and when the messages of heaven reach him, there is ever, secretly or openly, the defiant resistance involved in these insolent words. The removal of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, as portrayed in the Divine Volume, is the history of the spirit’s change from a carnal state to a heavenly one—from one in which holy principles are bound, to one in which divine truth has made them free and blessed. All who come into free obedience to the commandments of the Lord must have forsaken the Egyptian state, and this gives us the reason why, in the first commandment, though addressed rightly to Christians and to all men, (for our Lord says, If we would enter into life we must keep the commandments,) the Divine Being speaks to us as the Lord our God, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. We have all then, this journey to make, if we would arrive at the Canaan state on earth, and the heavenly Canaan above.

An attentive study of this journey is then, to every spiritually-minded person, full of interest and importance. Every incident is a lesson. Every battle is the picture of a struggle in the soul. The leading, the support, the defence, vouchsafed by the Almighty from time to time, is descriptive of the protection

awarded to the Christian in his spiritual pilgrimage. And of these pilgrims of the spirit, in every age, the apostle says, "They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."—Heb. xi. 16.

One of the chief incidents in the Israelitish journey was the miraculous supply of food, given direct, day by day, with the exception of the Sabbath, for forty years, until they arrived in Canaan, and could obtain the natural supply from the promised land.

They had left Egypt and its food behind, they had the barren wilderness to traverse, and no natural source of sustenance during the journey, and they had not arrived at the country where their wants would be supplied in the regular course of things.

Is there anything in Christian experience in analogy with this? A little consideration will enable us to discover that there is. When one who has determined to live for heaven has left the pleasures of wickedness behind him, he has forsaken the fleshpots of Egypt. He will no more indulge in the delights of sin. His resolution is blessed by heaven; he goes forth triumphantly. He passes the Red Sea of all the false principles which would hinder his journey. He sings, as Israel did, the song of victory. He goes on rejoicing. He supposes the work is done, and heaven will assuredly be his. He imagines he is quite ready to enter, and almost longs for the pearly gates to unfold. He has a very vague idea of the nature of regeneration. He supposes it will be sudden and short, whereas it is ever painful and slow. To change man's thoughts or his fancies, is not difficult, often, and may speedily take place; but to change the affections which form the very man, is a work of a most gradual character. The fallen soul is like a world in ruins: to restore it to an image of heaven in every department, is an immense work, and must be gradual. That state of the human affections which is to be a source of happiness, a channel, or rather, a collection of innumerable channels, through which the adorable fountain of all good will for ever pour peace and every blessing, can only be given slowly. The old state of sinful pleasure is the food of Egypt, the new angelic state of holy interior blessedness is the regular food of Canaan,—the "wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates, and oil olives, and honey" (Deut. viii. 8) of the blessed land. Between the leaving of the one kind of pleasure, and the full possession of the other, there is a great interval, in which trials have to be

endured, assaults have to be received, painful duties and self-renunciations to be performed, heavy sorrows to be borne, self, in myriad forms, to be subdued: all this is the labour to be done in the wilderness; and during this time we cannot enter into the enjoyment of the pleasures of that heaven within which does exist in the soul, but which cannot yet be opened to us, of which with its joys, we have not yet come into the possession. We have left the food of evil, we have not yet got angel's food. We cannot subsist without food. How then is it to be obtained? The mode of the soul's supply is described by this miracle of giving the Manna.

That it was intended to bear this spiritual significance we may learn, first, from the fact that all food for the body is emblematical of food for the soul; and so used in the Word. Solid food is the symbol of goodness, which supplies the will with strength and blessing; and liquid food symbolizes truth, which refreshes the thirsty understanding. In this sense the Lord Jesus speaks, when He says, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."—Matt. vi. 6. Again, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you."—John vi. 27. "I have meat to eat which ye know not of."—John iv. 32. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."—Ver. 34.

That food which is eaten corresponds to goodness which is to be received into the will, is manifestly indicated in many portions of the Word. There is a very clear evidence of this in Psalm cvii. 8, 9: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing (or thirsty) soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." The prophet Isaiah gives a similar instance: "Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."—Isa. lv. 2. How strikingly the Divine Speaker by the prophet contrasts the empty pleasures of time and sense, for which so many toil, and the solid blessings of everlasting goodness. The glittering dreams of ambition are not bread, but bubbles which are never caught, or burst the moment they are seized. The sordid gains of avarice are not bread, but "dust which is the serpent's meat," and leaves the cravings of the soul unsatisfied. The filthy pleasures of the sensualist are not bread, but husks which the swine

do feed upon. And yet men, immortal beings, toil, and struggle, and labour, and fight, all the day of human life, for these unsatisfying, deceptive, and delusive enjoyments, and neglect that reception of heavenly goodness, which alone imparts undying peace. The prophet Jeremiah speaks by the same rule, because from the same divine inspiration, in the thirty-first chapter: "And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."—Ver. 14.

Not only is solid food in general the emblem of heavenly goodness, but Manna is especially selected in the New Testament, and used to represent this blessed meat for the soul. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."—Rev. ii. 17.

Here the hidden manna and the white stone are mentioned, to denote the celestial blessings of interior goodness and truth. The hidden manna, the secret joy and peace which follow conquered sin; the white stone, the clear confidence and assurance which his faith gives, by whom truth is loved and carried into practice. No man knows the worth nor the peculiar nature of those blessings but those who have enjoyed them. They are ever "meat to eat which the world knows not of."

We would here call attention to what seems somewhat remarkable in the phraseology of the verse we have selected as a text. The Israelites said one to another, "It is manna, for they wist not what it was." No doubt things are usually called by names which designate some qualities which are known. It seems a singular reason for calling this new substance manna, because they knew NOT what it was. Our difficulty on this point will vanish when we know that in Hebrew, manna or man-hu means what is it? or what is this? "The people came out of their tents, they saw a new and unknown substance lying around, and they said one to another, What is it?—Man-hu." This expression, therefore, became its name, to all future generations.

In the spiritual journey of the Christian, a circumstance of a precisely similar character takes place. The pleasures of mere sense have been left, the pilgrimage of the soul has been begun. No longer can the hollow delights of the selfish and the insincere charm the servant of a new law, and a new master. The duties of the Christian life are undertaken and at first with alacrity; but after a time there is a sense of want comes on, the pleasures of

the old life are remembered with a sigh, and the heart yearns somewhat for the enjoyments once so dear. Now is the time of trial. Duty, faith, heaven say, "Still forward. The appetites of the old man allure the tempted one to go back." He struggles painfully, and would fall, but for the Divine Law, and the doctrine which explains and applies it; these are the Moses and Aaron who lead us spiritually, and these point to the only source of help and blessing, and say, "Come near unto the Lord, for He hath heard your murmurings." The struggle is now near its end, a sense of the Divine Presence has come. "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."—Ex. xvi. 10. The Israelites had come up from Elim unto the wilderness which lay between Elim and Sinai; to look to the wilderness was then to look forward. And thus before them appeared the cloud, with the glory of the Lord resplendent in it; a figure of the letter of the Word, with the glory of its Divine Spirit shining through it. So appears the Word when the soul is recovering from the struggle of temptation, and the trial is well over. The promises of heaven brighten over the spirit's path. We feel conscious of our experience similar to that which dictated the beautiful lines.—

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

Already the darkness of the cloud is being fringed and permeated with the glory of heavenly light. We are conscious that the Saviour is with us, and soon all will be well.

The Lord gives man to see that his struggle and distress have not been unobserved, but have prepared him for higher states of blessing. "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost upon the ground."—Ex. xvi. 12—14.

The bird here called a quail was a sea-bird (see Num. xi. 31), and its flesh which was to be given in the evening, corresponds to the satisfaction felt by the Christian, that his danger is over.

He is conscious of this while it is evening, whilst he is yet in an obscure state. It is not the reception of inward divine goodness, like what is represented by eating the flesh of the divine Saviour. It is only like eating the flesh of a sea bird. Yet to feel safe: to be no longer harassed by a fear of approaching ruin: to have comfort over the mind, like the quails covering the camp: this is much, but it is only preparatory to what is to follow.

Evening preceded the morning in the days of creation; and so it does in the present case. Throughout the regenerate career of man, he rises from shade to light, from cold to warmth. After the evening that ends his temptation, comes the morning of a new state. Dew is mentioned first as lying round about the host, and then the manna was found.

Dew corresponds to that inward truth which descends into the soul from the Lord, when all is peaceful and happy within. The truth of peace fills the Christian with confidence in his heavenly Father, with an assurance of his love, and a firm reliance on his providential care. When in a spiritual morning, this dew has descended upon him, fear is unfelt, solicitude no longer disturbs him; he relies with a child's confiding trust on the Giver of all good, and feels a freshness and vigour like those of heaven's own morning over the soul. This cheering, inward, blessed sensation is often in the Word described by dew. Thus in Isaiah, "For so the Lord said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of *dew* in the heat of harvest."—chap. xviii. 4. "I will be as the *dew* unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."—Hosea xiv. 5. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."—Micah v. 7.

The sense of rest, of confidence, of peace, of future progress, which is expressed in this passage, and which comes from the assurance of nearness to, and communion with the Lord, is with exquisite appropriateness expressed by dew. When, on a summer's morning, we walk forth in a beautiful country, the red light of the early dawn tinging the whole eastern horizon with golden splendour, a holy quiet reigning around, not broken, but charmed and enriched with the thrilling songs of the birds, while every leaf, blade, hedgerow, and flower, are gemmed with pearly dew, glittering like diamonds in the sun's new beams, there is an image of the soul—calmed, illuminated, and blessed, with the truth of peace.

But after the dew, we come to the manna—the substantial

food which gave so much pleasure, and so much support. We are informed it was a small round thing, like hoar-frost, white as snow, and sweet as wafers, or thin cakes, made with honey (ver. 31).

When it is seen that solid food in divine language corresponds to goodness, which supplies the will of every one who is living for heaven, with energy and delight, and remember that this manna was given to supply food to the Israelites, while they were in the transition period between living in Egypt and living in Canaan, we shall easily perceive that it is the symbol of that heavenly goodness which the Lord can impart to the soul of man, while it is in the transition state, labouring to become regenerate, following the truth, fighting against its evils as they from time to time present themselves, but not yet entered into that phase of the spiritual life, in which he feels at home in heavenly things. He has the spirit of truth *with* him, but not yet *in* him (John xiv. 17). He, like the apostle, is striving to attain the resurrection from the dead, but has not yet attained. He is reaching forward to those things which are before (Phil. iii. 11—13). Such is the ordinary state of earnest, spiritually-minded Christians, for the greater portion of their lives. Hence the manna describes the goodness and the delight which the Divine Mercy imparts to man while labouring to become regenerate. It is small, because, as compared with true angelic joy, it is of little account. It is round, because roundness expresses the smoothness, and also the completeness, of goodness, as compared with truth:—truth is ever sharp and piercing. It is white to denote its purity, and sweet to express its deliciousness. It is like a thin cake, or wafer, to mark its inferiority, its shallowness, so to speak, when compared with true celestial joy. Yet feeble as it is, so far does it transcend all merely human and external joy, that when it is first truly awakened in the soul, all other delights in the estimation of the possessor become as nothing, and he cries out in the spirit, What is this; for he knows not what it is.

It is a state of peace, of richness, of sweetness, that passeth all understanding. It may be felt, but cannot be described. It is as if every fibre of the soul breathed joy. It is blessedness unspeakable. All other delights seem now unutterably poor. They are as the lights of earth, in the presence of the sun. And the soul entranced by this amazing rapture cries out, What is it?

“ To take a glimpse within the veil,
To know the Lord is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable, divine.

These are the joys that satisfy
 And sanctify the mind,
 Which make the spirit mount on high
 And leave the world behind."

Such is the experience intimated in the spiritual sense of the exclamation, What is it! and the additional intimation, "for they knew not what it was." How strange and how sad it is, that so many of us should prefer to this exalted good and its delight, the low and fleeting dreams of earth. Though universal experience has taught to be true what the Divine Word declares, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The wicked is like a troubled sea, that casts up mire and dirt." Though the delights of the evil are but like the smiling vineyards which cover a volcano, bearing the fires in their bosom which are secretly devouring their supports, and will one day pour their lava-tides over all the enchanting scenes which form the lovely covering of the hidden curse, and leave all blackened and bare, we linger near the danger instead of deciding at once to fly. Oh, may it be our wisdom to take our cross, to resolve to quit at whatever expense, the low delights of sensual life, and live for heaven. Thus may we come under the protection of the Most High, and on our spiritual journey eat of his hidden manna.

We must, however, notice some additional circumstances connected with the descent of manna, which are alike interesting and instructive.

It was to be gathered daily,—what each man needed for each day's use. None was to be kept for the morrow, except on the sixth day, when enough was to be gathered for itself, and for the Sabbath also, on which day, no manna would descend, there should be entire rest.

By receiving each day the food for the day, and no more, the important lesson is conveyed, that we should ever be guided in our wish to receive heavenly blessings, not by the desire of selfish gratification, but by the love of use. So much as we need for our work, so much should we desire to receive. The petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," is in harmony with the same great truth. Seek food for use, and delight will be given in. Seek it also for the duties of to-day. The only way to make any advance in heavenly things is to do our duty now. The good not used now will vanish when the sun of selfishness becomes vigorous within us. If we attempt to save it for the future, and to flatter ourselves with the good we will some day do, it will breed the worms of vain conceits, flattering and false. It may become polluted hypocrisy, most

abhorrent in the sight of God and angels, but can never be saving good.

The lesson involved in the corruption of the manna in the hands of those who gathered to hoard and not to use, is of inestimable value. To be a miser, is bad in earthly things, but far worse in heavenly. And it is to be feared that spiritual hoarding is even more prevalent than natural. How many sermons do we hear with delight, but whose influence goes no farther than to stock our memories! How many good books do we read, whose pages unfold to us exalted lessons, and truths of sterling worth! We hear, we read, and we admire, but our hearts remain as cold, heedless, and unpractical, as before. We are no better, we admit; but we do not suspect what is the real truth—that we are worse. The manna we are hoping to preserve for future use, is becoming corrupted and defiled. We are gliding into states of self-dependency, self-complacency, self-flattery. We are supposing we are righteous, or, at least, in no danger, because we know righteous things, while, with every effort we make, we are strengthening our inherent evils, our hereditary tendencies. We are not searching out our frailties and opposing them, but indulging them, and salving them over with our religious knowledge and pious observances. The richest substances become, when corrupted, the most loathsome; and nothing is so abhorrent in the divine sight as a religion unused for good, pandering only to self-gratulation and deceit. In the unfoldings of the soul, which take place in the eternal world—for the books will be opened—many a fair pretence, many a specious covering, many a settled sanctimoniousness in a soul which has avoided justice and active usefulness, when unveiled, will be found abhorrent to celestial beings; it will be far, far from possessing the odour of sanctity, and will be registered as unclean, both by God and heaven. And, he who is filthy, will, alas, be for ever filthy still. The polluted manna also bred worms. And when we hear the false pretences which spring from mock religion, the conceits of our own excellence, the fancies engendered by the love of procrastination, the dream that our religion being that of the respectable world, must be all-sufficient, that we do as other people do, and certainly are not as loose as many are. That we will bring all the excellent things we hear and read into practice some day, when we have less to do with the world. And, probably, we shall not be judged so strictly in relation to our lives, because we are so rigid in our faith. We certainly will have nothing to say, but scorn and condemnation, to those who differ in creed from us. Alas, thus drone, and dream, and destroy

themselves, those who love darkness rather than light. So swarm the wicked with conceits, vile as they are false. So maunder on in folly and falsehood for ever, those whose worm never dies. And what a lot is this. For ever deceiving ourselves. Plunging down and down, a bottomless pit of error. One fallacy exposed and exploded, only left for another. Everlastingly striving to delude others, and in effect everlastingly deluding ourselves. Instead of the living beauty and health of the spiritual body of an angel, our appearance in the sight of truth must be that of a carcase breeding worms, painful to us, and disgusting to others.

Oh! may we, beloved brethren, be delivered, by active living hunger after righteousness, from the delay which thus pollutes the heart, and the worms which thus destroy the mind.

Our whole progress depends on eating to-day, what God gives to-day. To-morrow, is the day, that with the sinner never comes. Present strength is given for present duty. To-day's duty done, provides us with an appetite for new food, and He who cared for and supplied us to-day, will give us all that is needful and happy, for each succeeding one. In this sense the Lord Jesus said, "Take no thought for the morrow, let the morrow take thought for itself, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

Oh! what a relief from the anxieties of life would it be if this grand lesson were admitted and practised! What a load of cares and fears would fall away.

Far would fly each care and sorrow,
God provideth for the morrow.

The same lesson would teach us also the duty of doing, as it comes, the work of each successive stage of our business of life, and the reception of its proper and present blessing. "Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man. Let no man leave of it until the morning."—Ex. xvi. 16, 19.

One exception to this rule, however, there was. It is thus stated: "See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."—Ver. 29. Days for the soul, are states. The six days of labour represent the states of the soul, in which it is striving to obey a truth, although as yet it is laborious to do so, in consequence of oppositions within and without. The sixth day, is the end of this struggle, when the soul has succeeded in realizing, not only the truth of a duty, or a principle, but also

the good, the blessedness, of it. Two omers are then received, the bread of two days.

In the early periods of our regenerate life, we are only able to attend to one thing at a time, to acquire knowledge first, next to reduce that knowledge to practice, by opposing the evils we discover in our minds contrary to the truth, then to resist the temptation to fall back again, steadily. Such is our work at the commencement and through the middle of the week, but near its termination we are permitted to be tempted more deeply than before. We come to the verge of despair. We see, that of ourselves we are weak and helpless, only, by divine mercy we are preserved. We have been led to the brink of ruin, and have seen the divine hand outstretched to deliver us. We have learned by our own experience, the truth of those divine words, "Without me ye can do nothing." At the same time, however, we have learned that when we truly seek it, divine help is ever near. When we passed through the valley of the shadow of death, we suffered no evil; the Lord was present with us; His rod and His staff comforted us. He has made a table before us in the presence of our enemies. He has anointed our heads with oil, our cups run over. We are now fully prepared in all our ways to acknowledge Him. We gather now, not only the good of truth, but also the good of love. Enough of good to aid in serving our fellow-creatures, and enough to enable us, with gratitude, to serve and adore the Lord. We feel that it is by divine mercy alone we are what we are, and from our hearts we can join the angelic hosts in saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

The Sabbath, which follows, represents the soul's conjunction and communion, with the Lord. This is done within the soul, when it is thus prepared, by the Lord Jesus alone. Hence, He is Lord of the Sabbath-day, and man ceases to work. Man enjoys a hallowed time, a holy state of calm and peace. Such is the Sabbath of the soul. This was represented by the cessation of manna, on the day of the Sabbath.

One more incident we would notice. The manna was gathered by an omer* full at once, and no otherwise; and we are informed at the conclusion of the narrative, "Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah."—Ver. 36.

There were three chief measures for dry articles, each ten times larger than the other. The omer, the ephah, and the

* Between five and six pints.

homer (Ezek. xlv. 11). These three measures, like the three kinds of bread of the tabernacle—the loaf, the cake and the wafer—we may readily conceive, have relation to the reception of heavenly good, by the three grand classes of Christians, who form afterwards the three heavens of the Lord (2 Cor. xii. 2). The good which they receive who have entered fully into love to the Lord as the supreme source of all their operations, is of the largest measure, the homer. The good of those who glory rather in the light than the love of heaven, though they are true to the light, and sons of the light, is of the second measure, the ephah. The good of those who are not even intellectual Christians, but still steadily obey what they see to be enjoined in the Word, is the lowest measure, the omer, which is the tenth part of the ephah. And this is the measure by which we all receive heavenly good, in our spiritual journey. Our law of duty, is, to obey the ten commandments. Each commandment obeyed, brings its omer of blessing.

One of the most grievous errors in Christian experience, is to stand proposing to ourselves to do something large, to defer the simple duties of daily life, promising ourselves to do some astonishing work, some day. In this, there is much self-deception. We should ever remember destruction may be great and sudden, but all growth and erection are slow and gradual. Vegetation rises almost imperceptibly; buildings rise brick by brick, stone by stone; rains come in drops; the body is renewed and strengthened by daily food; so is it with religion,—it is “first the blade, then the ear, and after that, the full corn in the ear.”—Mark iv. 28. We must gather the heavenly manna, then, by the omer; the measure in which we obey the laws of duty will be the measure according to which the blessings of heaven will be imparted.

Once more, my beloved hearers, let me remind you of the fact, that regeneration is a journey. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.”—Matt. vii. 14. Few there be, indeed, that really try to find it. Yet it is a way that must be trodden, if we are to be prepared for heaven. Heaven can only be formed of the heavenly-minded. That is evident. Selfish and worldly-minded men can never make a heaven, place them where we will. The cruel, the haters, the scorers, the polluted, can never be formed into a blessed company of everlastingly happy ones, but by the journey of regeneration. We must be born again. We must leave the Egypt of mere outward learning, outward talent, and outward pleasures; and seek a state in which the love of what

is good, for its own sake,—the love of what is true, for goodness sake; and the love of obeying God in all things will form the constant habits of the soul. These make the Canaan within. Before this state is attained, we have many changes to undergo. Our march is through a wilderness; and it is a march. Step by step only can we reach it. There is no avoiding the journey,—no short cut. Onward we must go, determined to sacrifice whatever principle, temper, habit, practice, or interest, stands in the way. Thus are the soldiers of salvation formed. The road is chequered. Sometimes it is in a deep, dark glen; sometimes over a glorious mountain: now we come to wilds, where furious beasts howl, and now to pastoral plains where sheep and lambs graze and lie down. To-day, the weather is bitter, and storms rage around: to-morrow, all is calm, serene and lovely. We must take these variations as they come; and we have no provisions sufficient for the journey; nor shall we be able to raise any by our own labor, until we have reached the Promised Land. Forlorn enough would be our prospect, but happily we have an all-sufficient source of help. “The Eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before us; and say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also, his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

This glorious God and Saviour will provide us with food by the way. Though we have no delight proper to ourselves, in heavenly purposes and principles, he will give us delight. Day by day, he will feed us, comfort us, cheer us, bless us. No good thing shall we want. The Lord will provide.

Can we, then, hesitate in entering upon this important journey. Have we not been slaves in Egypt too long? Too long been content with the anxieties, the cares, the turmoils, and the miseries of a life quite unworthy of heirs of immortality, the children of the Heavenly King?

Let us at once rise, trusting in the call of heaven, and confidently relying that bread will be given us, our waters will be sure. Manna, so rich and delightful, will descend; and, entranced with its exceeding sweetness, we shall exclaim, “What is it?” What is it, O Lord Jesus, which thy mercy has provided? It must be angels’ food. We had hoped only to be pardoned for our rebellion, our negligence, our waste of thy

former gifts, but here is the bread of heaven! What is it? All our former joys have had some alloy in them, have been hollow and short-lived, superficial and vain. But this is interior, pure, deep, lasting, sweet beyond expression,—a foretaste of heaven. And if such is the foretaste, what must the blessedness of heaven itself be? O may our hearts, encouraged by this bliss vouchsafed to us in the wilderness, faithfully follow out our calling. Never suffering ourselves to be turned aside, but heeding constantly the voice of God which says, "This is the way, walk thou in it."

"While here below we walk with God,
With heaven our journey's end in view;
Supported by his staff and rod,
We find his mercies ever new.

This wilderness affords no food;
But he for our support prepares;
Our God provides all needful good:
His bounteous hand no blessing spares."

Nor must we, lastly, forget that all our manna has one divine source—the Lord Jesus Christ. How strikingly He taught this in the Gospel. "I am that bread of life." Again, "As the Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." He is goodness itself. From His divine love, or the Father within Him, the divine good, the bread of life, was brought down into the humanity He assumed, to be imparted to the world. From His glorified humanity it is now given to angels, and offered to all who begin the pilgrimage of regeneration. Alas, that all mankind are not included in this list. The service of the world and sin is hard,—the food, poor,—the end, ruin. "Let us arise, for this is not our rest, the whole land is polluted." Let us fly from Egyptian bondage, and commence a career on which angels will be our assistants and companions, the divine truth will lead us by day, the divine love will console us by night, we shall be nourished with the bread of heaven, and men will eat angels' food, our contests will be certain victory, and our end be heaven. Let us begin this journey, if it has yet to be commenced, and trust our divine Saviour for the needful strength to persevere, assured that we shall never lack it, while we look up to Him with the language of his disciples, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

The bread of life. What a beautiful name, and how suggestive. It is said of the Lord's disciples of old on one occasion,

“They had forgotten to take bread.” How often is it the case now. We feel feeble and weak on our spiritual journey. We are too apt to be infirm for good, we are easily deterred from pursuing, from carrying out, purposes of kindness, and objects of blessing for others. We are even becoming impatient, and easily offended. How is it our spiritual life is so weak. We have forgotten to take bread. We have been delighted with the truth and doctrine of religion, we have seen and acknowledged its beauty and worth, and have set out upon our journey; but soon we become fatigued, weary, and worn, for we have forgotten to take bread. Happily the Lord is near, and has compassion upon us. If, in devotion and humility we go to Him, He will not cast us away. He will give us the bread of life, He will strengthen us, cheer us, animate us, with holy goodness, and we shall be truly satisfied. Our life will be enriched, and our listlessness removed. But we must have bread. Truth alone, however plenteous, will not suffice, any more than faith alone will satisfy as a doctrine. We must have the bread that strengtheneth man’s heart (Ps. civ. 15). In every state, and in every undertaking, let us seek this blessed nourishment in the spirit and language of the Lord’s prayer: “Give us this day, our daily bread.” Nor, must we on the other hand, fall into the supposition that truth is of slight importance, and goodness is everything. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”—Matt. iv. 4. The Christian must know the truth, cultivate the truth, become enlightened by truth, and the truth shall make him free. Good to strengthen, and truth to direct; good to animate, and truth to illumine; good to bless, and truth to confirm,—these constitute the twin essentials for the mind, and when these are so embraced as to flow into the virtues of a just and holy life, and works testify to the presence of heaven within, we shall assuredly realize the sacred declaration, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

SERMON VI.

THE LAW RESPECTING MILLSTONES.

"No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge."—Deut. xxiv. 6.

"THE law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Ps. xix. 7. This is the grand truth, we should ever bear in mind when considering the legal part of the Word of God. The Jewish Law was important to that people as their national code. Its enactments were wisely adapted to their condition, and the land they inhabited, and were calculated to secure their prosperity. But these considerations alone would not have justified its adoption in the Word of God. The Divine Mind aims at higher objects than those which are included in this world's prosperity: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—Is. lv. 8, 9. The Jewish Law, then, although admirably adapted to secure the freedom, independence, comfort, and well-being of the people so long as it should be faithfully observed; in this respect, has little more claim upon our attention and respect, than the laws of other nations. For us, and for our circumstances, it would now be mainly obsolete. It was given in a narrower field, and in circumstances widely different from those which the British nation occupies. Its laws, in many respects, would be totally unsuitable for us, and the British legislature does wisely, in making laws for us, to consider how the ends of national virtue and prosperity can be secured by laws, dictated by justice and judgment, adapted to the wants of modern society, entirely irrespective of Jewish legislation. "God lives now, and to the men who seek first His kingdom and its justice" (Matt. vi. 33), He gives the inspirations of His wisdom at the present day, as He did in days of old. As outward law, the regulations of the Jews have long passed away; but as inward law, "they are part of the Word of the Lord, which will endure for ever."—Is. xl. 8. As laws

for the body we have with them but little concern, but they will have everlasting worth for us, as the Law of the Lord which converteth the soul. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect."—Heb. x. 1.

But the law being a shadow, or representation of good things, though of itself insufficient to make those who followed it perfect, yet was the outward form of such principles and practices as do lead to the perfection of the soul. It is the correspondence of the outward laws to inward laws, which constitutes their dignity and worth. To know this correspondence, and see its application to the soul, is to be able to appreciate the words of the Psalmist: "The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."—Ps. cxix. 72.

That a spiritual meaning is contained in the law, we must feel, if we are assured of their divine character. Who can imagine with a worthy idea of infinite wisdom, the laws of this and the two foregoing chapters to have come from God, unless besides the letter in which they served the Jews, they have some deeper import by which they can give wisdom to Christians. "The law of the birds' nests."—chap. xxii. 6, 7. "The law of not sowing a vineyard with different seeds."—ver. 9. "The law of not ploughing with an ox and an ass together; the law of not wearing a garment of linen and woollen together."—ver. 11. "The law of making fringes to their garments."—ver. 12. And this law of the millstone, and many others are surely not of that dignified character to be worthy of the wisdom of Him whose understanding is infinite, unless some hidden wisdom is contained in them. But this being admitted to be there, we may then join with the Psalmist in the petition, whenever we study this portion of Divine Revelation: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."—Ps. cxix. 18. May this be our devout prayer in considering the law before us.

We may be the more prepared to appreciate the spirit of the divine law before us, if we have reflected often on the suggestive thought, that all vegetable nature is emblematic of the growth of principles in the mind. This, every one feels so palpably, that our whole language is imbued with the idea. The barren intellect, the cultivated mind, the fruitful suggestion, the rooted prejudice, the fertile fancy, are terms which one continually hears. Poetry is full of this correspondence. To the poetic feeling in all of us—

"The earth has still
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,
Substantial happiness for transient joy ;
Scenes formed for contemplation, and to nurse
The growing seeds of wisdom ; that suggest
By every pleasing image they present,
Reflections such as mellorate the heart,
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind."

To the inner eye of the thoughtful mind, each spot of earth is a lesson. The field, with its rich green sprouting vegetation, is the symbol of the mind when young living thoughts are rising into life and vigour. The tree in blossom, typifies the intellect adorned with the rich hue and beauty of heavenly lessons ; the tree loaded with fruits, is the blessed emblem of religion brought into practice :—of the man who is full of the sap of heaven, and brings forth, each in its season, the sacred works of justice, charity, and piety. Such are the trees of righteousness, branches of the planting of Jehovah (Is. lxii. 2).

To a mind thus susceptible of the inner teachings of nature, also, all varieties of earth's scenery are instructive. It is beautifully remarked by the poet Southey,

"Truth has her pleasure grounds, her haunts of ease,
And easy contemplation ; gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks ; her sunny glades
And shady groves in studied contrast,—each
For recreation, leading into each :
These may he range, if willing to partake
Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence recruited for the tasks,
And course of service, truth requires from those
Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
And guard her fortresses."

Earth, in this view, becomes indeed the shadow of things mental and divine. The soul views in it an inner glory everywhere. The flowers of life never die. When they have perished from the surface, they bloom still in the spirit. Let not the sensualist say that this is dreaming only. The soul feels that it is gathering earth's richest, truest treasures. It is soaring.

"Hush, 'tis thou that dreaming art,
Calmer is her gentle heart.
Yes ! o'er fountain, vale, and grove,
Leaf and flower, hath gushed her love ;
But that passion, deep and true,
Knows not of a last adieu.
Types of lovelier than these,
In their fragile mould she sees ;
Shadows of yet richer things,
Born beside immortal springs,
Into fuller glory wrought,
Kindled by surpassing thought !"

Our divine Master, taught us thus to walk among the green things of earth, and thus to use them. The herb, the flower, and the tree, were to Him perpetual sources of instruction. "And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should

cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, He knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear."—Mark iv. 27—29. Here the divine use of correspondence, and the correspondence of corn, are evident. But before dwelling upon the specific representation of corn, allow me to impress upon you all, the truth so clearly shewn in this passage, and by the whole vegetable kingdom, that all growth in heavenly, as all growth in earthly things, is gradual.

When the seed of instruction in the duties and promises of religion has been sown ("the seed is the Word of God," Luke viii. 11), and received into the ground of an honest and good heart, it soon begins to shew signs of life and germination. First comes the blade, consisting of gentle thoughts, of quiet meditations, of confiding trust. The Lord's invitations are pondered over and believed. And the penitent experiences an interest in all the offers of mercy, in all the promises of defence, and ventures to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters."—Ps. xxiii. 1, 2. All around the fresh blades of comfort and support are seen, and the spirit reclines there like the sheep on the green grass. It is first the blade. When the perceptions of truth become stronger, and a clear comprehension of the principles of faith are obtained—of the faith which manifests itself in the virtues of a holy life; the understanding of truth forms the ear; and when this understanding of truth is so filled by the love of it, that it can be brought into use, the good to which truth leads, as seen in the mind, is the full corn, in the ear. The virtuous life, inculcated by living religion, is indeed the full corn, the essential substance, that promotes true heavenly nourishment, and leads to religious growth. It is not by knowing only, but by loving and doing, that we truly advance in our preparation for the regions of peace. An earnest and persevering love of the sacred duties of life, forms a virtuous character, and doing fixes it in our habits. When we have learned and meditated upon the commands of the Lord, and seeing their bearing upon our lives, we aim with sincere purpose of heart, to carry them into action, we are nourishing ourselves with the corn of heaven, we are enjoying "angels' food."

Such correspondence of corn, to truths, when they are elevated to become purposes of the heart, is the reason why it is referred to in the holy imagery, both of the Old and New Testament. "Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to

tread out the corn; but I passed over her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break his clods. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."—Hosea x. 11, 12. It is manifest that the corn here referred to is spiritual food. The prophet Isaiah gives a similar instance when he addresses the Church: in the words, "O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you."—chap. xxi. 10. The Lord Jesus undoubtedly employed the same idea when pointing to the fields, as representing the condition of a large portion of mankind; He said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth, may rejoice together."—John iv. 35, 36. He who reapeth this corn of heavenly goodness, does indeed gather fruit to life eternal. He receiveth wages full of blessing. O let us hope that our fields are white. Let us cultivate the practical teachings of the Divine Word. Let our spirits be brought in meditation and prayer, often under the holy beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and there warmed by His love, and brightened by His wisdom, be blest by an ever-increasing harvest, which brings everlasting wages.

Before quitting the point of the subject before us, let me remind you of that most important fact, which is equally true in vegetable growth, and in the growth of religion, that all progress is gradual. It is "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." Destruction may be sudden; growth and erection are by little and little. To rejoice over the sheaves of plenty, we must be up and doing. We must steadily persevere. He who is negligent will have a scanty harvest, and he who delays to begin until harvest time, will have no harvest at all. However bitter it may be to us to shake off our lethargy, and break up our fallow ground, let us, by all our hopes of heaven, or happiness on earth—for the laws of the one are the laws of the other—by all our prospects of a happy home, of a Christian and a heaven-blessed life, not hesitate to send the ploughshare of honest determination through our thorns and thistles, and break up our fallow ground. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—Ps. cxxvi. 6.

But corn, before it is fit for human food, must be brought to the mill, and ground; and this operation is more especially

connected with the subject before us. The use of grinding is twofold; first, the separation of the husk, and less nutritious portion, from the richer, interior substance of the corn; and secondly, the trituration and pulverizing, which reduces the grain to flour, and thus presents it fully prepared for the sustenance of man. Both these essential services are done by the mill. In ancient times, each family had its own mill, and the flour for daily use was ground each day. The mill was composed of two circular, flat stones; one the upper, the other the lower. In the upper one there was a hole, in which a wooden handle was fixed, by which it was made to go round. The persons grinding sat to their work, and frequently when women did it, there would be two, and one passed the handle round to the other, and so the work went on. To this our blessed Lord alludes when He says, at the end of the Church, meant by the end of the age, or world. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left."—Matt. xxiv. 41.

These circumstances all guide us to the correspondence. Corn, we have seen, corresponds to the good in life to which truth leads. The virtues which our views of religion open up to us are a harvest of graces; but, as general principles, they are not quite ready for daily use. They require to be rationally investigated, to be stripped of the forms in which we learned them, and to be accommodated to our own wants and circumstances. This is one of the works of the rational faculty in man. In this respect it is a spiritual mill. The operation of mental grinding is most interesting to contemplate. Let us endeavour to obtain a definite view of it. We are taught in the Divine Word the duty, and the right, of yielding ready and implicit obedience to the commands of the Most High. This was the law in Eden. It was thundered on Sinai, it was announced again and again to the Israelites. The dying words of Moses impressively hung upon this duty. "He said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do all the words of this law, for it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." The whole history of the Jews is an exemplification of this truth. When they were obedient all went well with them; when they were disobedient their guilt was soon followed by defeat, distress, captivity, slavery, and destruction. The Psalmist sung the blessedness of obeying the law. The prophets announced that all future glory was based upon a faithful compliance with the divine commandments; as all past loss had resulted

from past dereliction. "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then would thy peace have been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." When our Divine Father Himself tabernacled amongst us, He not only proclaimed that he who broke the least commandment, and taught men so, would be considered the least in the kingdom of God, but He fulfilled in every particular His own law, and thus magnified the law, and made it honorable. If He, God incarnate, might not break it, but must fulfil all righteousness, much more must we. If we would enter into life, we must keep the commandments. He came to give us power to do it. He is ever present to the seeking soul, for the same gracious purpose, now. If we read the Word with a single eye, we learn this doctrine in every page. We ponder over it, we pray over it. It grows up within us from story and history, from precept and prophecy. We obtain a clear understanding of it. Then comes the determination, if we are wise, to will and to do it. We have then got "the full corn in the ear." But obedience with us has a very different application from that which it had in ancient times. We need yet to see how to apply this general principle to our own circumstances. We are merchants, tradesmen, workmen. We are engaged, it may be, in the warehouse, at the counter, in the shop. We are engaged in factories, or in land carriage, or are seamen. We are possibly men of letters, or engaged in medical or legal pursuits, or in the ministry. We are fathers, brothers, friends, citizens, subjects, or governors. We are of the gentler sex, perhaps: we are mothers, wives, sisters, mistresses or servants. What does obedience to God's commandments require of us? How is it to be applied to our case, and in our circumstances? We must set our mental will to work to bring this sacred duty of obedience to our daily operations of life, and thus reduce the corn to flour, which will serve for daily bread.

It is the same with faith in the Lord. We are taught by patriarchs who lived and died in faith, that trust in the mercy and support of the God of love is the sure foundation of solid virtue and real comfort. This lesson is illustrated by the triumphant example of seer and sage. In the deepest want, in the deepest sorrow, to the trustful, help ever came. No temptation was suffered to be so great, that loving faith could not come out of it unscathed and purified. And when, through the perversity and degeneracy of ages, the cup of human wickedness became full, and no help but that of Jehovah in the flesh would suffice to seek and to save those who were lost, but now cried for deliverance, even that was not denied. The Father appeared in the

Son, Jehovah, in His humanity, brought his omnipotence to bear in rescuing his fallen children, conquered hell for them, and in his own glorified hands took possession for ever of the keys of hell and of death. Thus is the broad lesson for the fullest assurance of faith taught and impressed upon us in the inspired Word. We learn it, we understand it, we admit it, we seek to act upon it; but our circumstances are widely different from those of by-gone days. We have not to exercise it in outward persecution or violent danger. Our trials are of a less showy kind, but, to us, equally real. We fear we shall not succeed in business if we do justly. We fear, unless we are overweeningly anxious, we shall not succeed in the world's race. We fear that He who took care of us will not take care sufficiently of those who are to follow us, unless we overload body and mind with double work to provide for a long to-morrow. We fear we cannot overcome our selfishness, our sinfulness, our fretfulness, or our peevishness, and so we scarcely try. We fear it is no use to begin now, and we will wait for a more suitable opportunity—in age, in sickness, in retirement, in change of circumstances. Such are our oppositions to the divine lessons of trust in God. How shall we bring them to bear? We must employ our rational faculty, our mental mill, and thus prepare it. The Lord lives, and is as near to us as He ever was to men of old. All power is His in heaven and on earth, and He loves us infinitely. All things are really in His hands and under His control, and only apparently in those of His creatures. He who conquered all the powers of darkness can surely conquer the few who infest us. He to whom the combined power of sin could really do no harm, but who bruised the whole serpent's head, can surely bruise it in us. Come, now, and let us reason together, He says, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." When the rational faculty is thus employed, the good purposes which the teachings of the Word inspire are adapted to our states, and we feed upon them. Our spiritual mill does its appropriate work. In fact, every verse in the Holy Word affords it full employ, when we submit the hallowed teaching to its operation. For we are not to learn the letter only, we must uncover the husk of the corn of heaven, and enter into its spirit and life. Never was a more delusive fallacy than that which has taught men to trust in a mysterious religion, or the Word not understood. "When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which re-

ceived seed by the way side.”—Matt. xiii. 19. The Word not understood is like corn unground, or bread unmingled, undigested. It affords no nourishment. The light of heaven cannot illuminate one who makes no attempt to open his eyes. More light, more light; “open thou mine eyes,” should be the prayer of every mind. Then, soon would the time come, “when the knowledge of the Lord would cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.”

To know and understand the truth, that we may love and practise it; this is the spirit in which to read and hear the Word. The wisdom we understand enters into the mind, the wisdom we love enters into the heart. “The entrance of thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple.”—Ps. cxix. 130. The entrance of the divine words giveth light. The words which remain in the memory, and do not enter the intellect, leave us, and have left the world, unenlightened and unedified.

The grand use of the rational faculty, then, as a spiritual mill is evident. May we never surrender it, or barter it away. But the mill had two stones, an upper and a nether millstone.

Stones represent truths of doctrine, especially in relation to the firmness they afford as a foundation, and a defensive wall, to our faith. In this sense stones are constantly employed in the Word. “Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.”—Isa. xxviii. 16. No doubt the foundation stone means the foundation truth, that Jesus was Jehovah Himself, as our Saviour and Redeemer. He that believeth on this shall not hasten from one refuge to another, in the day of danger. His soul shall be satisfied with the presence, and with the loving protection, of God-with-us. He who believeth shall not make haste.

The Lord Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount with the same use of the correspondence of stone. “Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.”—Matt. vii. 24, 25. The rock is, evidently, the truth everywhere present in the Lord’s words. This truth is arrived at, by faithful and diligent investigation. Hence, in Luke, it is written, “Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man who built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation upon a rock. How important it is to dig deep, not to make a surface

examination only of divine truth. The richest jewels lie the deepest. The more interiorly we investigate, the brighter will be our reward, and the surer will be our foundation. The truth that God had really come to save men was the stone which the builders rejected, but which became the head of the corner (Lu. xx. 17). When the Gentiles had received the truths of the Christian religion, the apostle Peter calls them "lively stones, built into a spiritual house."—1 Peter ii. 5. When the Lord made the divine promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it," he obviously meant that pure truth would be imparted to the man who overcame his evils with a peculiar lustre, clearness, and power, which could only be fully appreciated by its happy possessor. The twelve stones, which should be the foundations of the New Jerusalem, mean all the grand truths of love, faith, and obedience, upon which that Church would be erected in the soul. The uses of stone manifest the correspondence. Stones for a foundation, and stones for a wall, are the express symbols of those truths upon which religion is founded, and by which it is defended; and when these are cemented together by love, they form a spiritual wall, through which neither evils nor errors can break.

The two stones of which the mill consists represent the two grand truths into which the whole Word divides itself: those which teach love to God, and love to man. The upper stone is the symbol of the first and great commandment. Our Lord refers to this when answering the question, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, 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."—Matt. xxii. 36—38.

The two tables of stone upon which the ten commandments, the first and the essential principles of all the divine Word, were written, were intended to represent the same twofold division of all heavenly lessons.

The mill, then, with its two stones, represents the rational faculty when it is furnished with these two grand truths. With these two universal principles it can do, and is intended to do the utmost service to man. Everything that enters the mind should be submitted to its inspection and action. Whatever is taught in relation to God, which is inconsistent with love to God

and love to man, should be rejected; whatever is in harmony with both should be received. All that love would do, God will do, for God is love; all that love would reject, God will reject, for God is love. So in relation to man. Our duty in all things is to measure our conduct by the great law, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets."—Matt. vi. 12. If the teaching which we hear and the lessons which we read are in harmony with this, then will our spiritual mill prepare them for practice. It will bring them into operation on the exchange, in the market, at home, and at work. By this shall we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.

Such is the spiritual mill, and such is its operation. What a wide field of use it has; and how essential is that use! To try, to sift, to discriminate, to investigate, to adapt all that we learn, so that fallacy and mere appearance may be rejected, and only what is really conducive to salvation and blessing be retained. "What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord."

With this view of the important objects and indispensable character of the millstones, seen in their correspondence, we shall be prepared to see in spiritual light the reason of the command in our text. "No man shall take the nether, or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge."

Of course, in its literal application to the Jews, this was a merciful law. It secured to all men, however poor, the means of preparing the food essential to life and health. This was never to be interfered with. Another law secured to the poor man corn for his present necessities, and this the mill to grind it. "No man shall take the nether or upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge." But of how much higher significance does this divine law become, when we see its relation to our spiritual life?—when we hear the divine announcement in this respect, that no man should be deprived of the free use of his reason in religion, nor led to part with either the truth, that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, the nether stone; or the love of the Lord, the supremely loveable, with all the heart. To retain these two grand laws, and to use them, to compare and harmonize all we are taught, as true, with them, this is our life.

To take a thing in pledge is to deprive of its possession, for to supply some other need for a time. There are some curious and interesting regulations respecting pledges in this same chapter. Some things might be pledged, as, for instance, a garment. The person taking the pledge must not go into the pledger's house to fetch it out; the owner must bring it out. The pledge

must be returned before the sun went down. These regulations have an important spiritual relation to our inner life, and in these, chiefly, their divine worth consists. A man's profession of religion, his spiritual garment, may be placed in abeyance, if he find it necessary for some higher spiritual good. He may forego for a time the form, to secure the substance. This the person himself may do externally, but his inmost affections must be untouched. We must not go into the house for the pledge. He must have it returned, at least when the sun goeth down. When states of spiritual cold and obscurity come on, it must be restored to him. When all is bright and cheerful with us, a vivid possession of our doctrinal views may be spared; but when trial comes on they are indispensable.

"But when, in life, we're tempest driven,
A conscience but a canker,
A correspondence fixed with heaven
Is sure a noble anchor."

We must have, then, in the time of obscurity, of cold, and of sorrow, all our religious convictions strongly wrapped around us, and feel thus the succour it is divinely intended they should give. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." But the millstones must not be parted with at any time, nor on any condition; it is taking a man's life to pledge. The rational faculty, and its two grand essential principles, must never be parted with, nor even be placed in abeyance.

Oh! that this great truth, that we ought never to suspend, never to place in abeyance, never to forego the use of this grand principle, our rational faculty, were engraven on every heart. In this sublime portion of our nature, the essential means of manhood reside. He will never become a man who never thoughtfully dares to reason for himself; who never strives to penetrate the appearances of things, and see with a single eye divine realities. Here is the judgment-seat for each mind. Here sits the porter of the castle of Mansoul, whose business is to challenge every comer, and to see that none enter but friends of its Lord. How poor a being he becomes who fears to use this glorious capability, let degenerate millions answer. He has not the fixed instincts of brutes, and their obedience to the laws of their order; and while he is born with debased affections, he does not use this grand means of rising for ever higher. Born in spiritual slavery, the truth alone can make us free. Without that, we cannot free ourselves from our own passions and prejudices, much less from the domination of other men. Without that, we cannot rise to the freedom of a citizen of heaven. We are things, not men. Let then no man take your mill; it is your life.

But neither the lower nor the upper millstone must be taken. The two grand essential truths, upon which all others hang, must neither of them be given up. Whatever is not in harmony with them ought not to be received. Whatever is unworthy of our love to God, whatever would lessen our love to man, should be rejected at once. How great a source of elevation should we constantly have, if, in all our hearing and reading, we should bring our spiritual corn to the mill, furnished with these spiritual stones! Let us notice their operation. We are reading the history of Israel. We learn how God selected them to be his people; how he brought them through great dangers, delivered them in a thousand straits, gave them peculiar laws, drove out and subdued their enemies, the previous possessors of Canaan, and blest them with safety and abundance so long as they were obedient; so that they supposed themselves the favourites of heaven. But, now, how shall I rationally understand this? I cannot conceive the Lord of all to have favourites, to be capricious, or make especial selections. I could not love with all my heart a being who was partial,—that had not the same kindness and love for others as for me. Heaven itself would have no charms for me if I were placed there by favouritism, by a partial will, which rejected and condemned others who were equally deserving of it, and prepared to enjoy it, with myself. Much rather would I say with the apostle, “I would be accursed for my brethren, if they might be saved.” The partial view will not agree with supreme love to God, nor love to man. But what, if the Israelites were selected for the sake of others, that they might represent those who were Israelites indeed, who are Jews inwardly, owning allegiance to the great Saviour, the divine King of the Jews. What if these laws are spiritually to be understood, and then become universal ones, true of every nation and every age? What if their enemies were types of our evils, which must be cast out, for us to be prepared for happiness? What if their country was an expressive symbol of heaven? Strip off the husks of the divine teaching, its temporal covering, its letter, and then you find the fine flour within, the lessons of goodness in strictest harmony with love to God, and charity to man. Nay, your love will, with every lesson, rise higher. You will be satisfied with honey from the rock, and be fed with the finest of the wheat (Ps. lxxxi. 16).

Take the character and history of David as the subject, and the bearing of it in the letter of the Word is certainly not such as to lead us to select him as the example of gentleness, of chastity, or of mercy. He was fierce and cruel to his enemies, and

revengeful at the last hour of his life. It would not increase our love to God to consider him as an individual person, a man after God's own heart. It certainly would not illustrate love to our neighbour for us to act in like manner. But let us remove the husk, and get to the interior of the lesson. Let us regard David as a type, but not a pattern. Let us regard him as representing the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine King of the spiritual Jews in all ages. The victories of David, as the shadows of the victories of the Redeeming God over infernal powers, those conflicts and triumphs by which he saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied. Let us think of him also as representing in a more particular application of his history, each Christian as he seeks to follow his Divine leader in the regeneration, and then the foes, which are condemned and rooted out, are not persons, but wicked principles. The charge to Solomon to put the foe to death whom David could not himself destroy, declares the desire of the soul, that the last vestige of interior evil, should be extirpated when it enters upon the possession of higher principles, though it is unable to do it now. Thus may spiritual food be obtained, when the rational faculty really seeks it. Thus we obtain bread to eat that the world knows not of.

But what a field for such a spiritual supply is the life of our adorable Lord. His birth, his journeys, his miracles, his sayings, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension, high above the heavens, all are fraught with wisdom for contemplation, and for life. He must be born in us, he must walk in us, he must calm our stormy sea, open our blind eyes, strengthen our withered forms, and enable us to walk in the path of his Divine commandments. He will live and die in us, for we shall find evil principles unmasked in our fallen nature, which will reject and deny the Lord, but he will rise again, and draw all things unto himself. So shall we find that his works, like his words, are spirit and they are life (John vi. 63).

Thus shall we find the corn of heaven full of nutritious food, when it has been adapted for nourishment by the spiritual mill; but we must never suffer either the nether or the upper stone to be taken in pledge, for it is in that case a man's life which is taken in pledge. Our principles of reasoning and comparison, must always be the two grand laws.

We have already noticed the remarkable saying by our Lord, that at the end of the dispensation He was then founding, "there should be two women grinding at the mill; one should be taken, and the other left." Those who do not remember that the Lord's words are spirit and life, but who hang only on the

letter, have been much perplexed with this passage. They have wondered why the obscure employment of two such women should have been selected by the Divine speaker; and, in case, the world with all its fields and mills should be burnt up where the rejected woman should be left. When, however, we regard working at the mill in its spiritual bearing, and the two women as the symbols of the two classes of persons to be found in a Church at its end, we can hardly fail to be instructed and edified. There are those in a fallen church who are genuine lovers of truth and goodness, who when false doctrines prevail, sigh like Mary, and say, "They have taken away my lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Such earnestly desire to see and practise the truth. They are a woman, like the king's daughter, all glorious within (Ps. xlv. 11). These investigate, as best they can, the truths of the Divine Word, and, though with much difficulty, they obtain food for their souls. Others, there are, who though in the field of the Church, have no genuine regard for truth at all. They love themselves, their pleasures, their passions, their power, and their conceits. They labour only to retain their pelf, place, and position, in all they do. They labour at their mill, they learn and investigate, but only to support their false views, and evil ends, not to receive or to support the truth. Both these classes are in the field, both are grinding at the mill, but one will be taken and the other left. One class can be taken into the holy city of the Church here, and into the glories of heaven hereafter; but the other, not. The difference of the two classes, though scarcely discernible to outward view, since all appear in externals alike, is most manifest to the searcher of hearts, and is no doubt the chief inward reason why the one class readily receive the truth, the other obstinately resist it. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world; but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. He that doeth the truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Finally, let me earnestly impress upon you all, the importance of using the mill. There is no possibility of true manhood being attained without a conscientious use of reason in receiving the things of God. Have no fear in employing the glorious faculties divine mercy has blest you with. The same trust that leads you to be confident that you are right in employing your hands to work and your feet to walk, because the God of Love and Wisdom has given them to you, and they must have been given to be used, should lead you as confidently to

use your reason to apprehend, to comprehend, and to hold the truth. Fear nothing, only be diligent and sincere. Oh, if this sacred liberty had been constantly maintained, how different would have been the lot of millions in the past, and at the present day. What is the outcry against reason, of the priests of mysterious folly, but a breach of the Divine Law before us. "You are simple people, sure to go wrong if you attempt to reason. Don't use your reason, you will sink into heresy or into infidelity. You must not think for yourself, we will tell you what to think. Your faculties are too weak to discover truth, although God gave them to you for that purpose, but we can discover truth for ourselves, and you too." Alas, for such preposterous folly. These blind leaders of the blind cause both to fall into the ditch.

Oh! that men would rise manfully to the dignity of their high character, as rational and immortal beings capable of receiving the truth, judging of it, loving it, and making it their own by practice. Reject every attempt to place this heavenly mill in pledge, for it is our real manhood, our life, that is wished to be taken, when we are told to forego the use of our reason.

Above all, let us see well that our mill has ever, in good condition, the nether and the upper stones. Let us pass no instruction that is inconsistent with love to our neighbour, the spiritual nether millstone. Let no sectarian sentiments, no idea that heaven was made just for this small party who think with us, or that gain our assent. Let us unite with men of love and virtue, of every name, assured that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Far be it from us to let the upper millstone go into pledge. Let us unceasingly try every sentiment proposed to us, as true, by the great supreme law of love to God above all things. Reject every doctrinal view which would lead you to regard Him as angry, vindictive, unmerciful, partial, changeable, or imperfect. But, on the other hand, everything that illustrates his infinite love and mercy; everything that shews him to be long-suffering, and plenteous in goodness and truth; everything that displays his matchless beauty, and the order of His almighty power; everything that exhibits His perfection as our Creator, His pity and compassion as our Redeemer, His tender care as our Friend and Father, His excellencies without limit, and his unceasing acts of kindness to attract man to be happy, to bless angels, and make the universe an abode of unlimited joy, that welcome and cherish. Always, let us rest assured, "the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."

SERMON VII.

THE BURNT SACRIFICE OF BIRDS.

"And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the Lord be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons. And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar: and he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes: and he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord."—Lev. i. 14—17.

THE custom of sacrificing, so wide spread among ancient nations, and even in the present day, indicates an origin of the practice in times most remote, and of such a character, as to affect the whole human family. The prominence of sacrifices, in the pages of divine revelation, is such as to command our deepest interest, while we seek to solve the questions, why were they instituted? and what do they mean? To consider these questions attentively, and to answer them truly, may the spirit of our Blessed Lord, without which we can have neither the love nor the light which are essential to the enquiry, lend his all-sufficient aid.

The first observation which we propose to illustrate from the Divine Word on this subject is, that the leading idea presented to us by revelation is, that sacrifices are the dedication in worship of good things to the Lord, not the punishment of bad ones.

Secondly. We would remark that the objects offered, and the mode of the sacrifice, are strictly in accordance with worship according to correspondences, and hence we infer that they originated in the perversion of the ancient, universal knowledge of that science.

Thirdly. That outward sacrifices never were in accordance with the Divine Will, but the result of human darkness and degeneracy.

Fourthly. That all the typical meaning of sacrifices in relation to man, has a still higher fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, the great high priest, and the supreme sacrifice.

We have observed, in the first place, that worship and dedication to God are the general ideas connected with sacrifices in

the Sacred Scriptures, and this is most important to a right understanding of them. They have very commonly been regarded as typical of the punishment of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins. But a careful consideration of the subject will shew that punishment is not included in the true idea of sacrifice at all, much less the punishment by an infinitely righteous Being of the innocent for the guilty. His own Divine love induced the Saviour to glorify His humanity through sufferings, that He might be a Saviour for ever to bring His children to Himself; and thus He suffered, as the apostle says, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He suffered to satisfy His love, not as a punishment to appease the anger of another divine person. The idea of punishment is not included in the doctrine of sacrifice at all.

In the sacrifice before us, "it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." A symbol this of the offering of interior worship, from love, the fire of the soul, on the altar of the heart. This constitutes a spiritual burnt sacrifice, a sweet savour indeed unto the Lord. But, let us remark, how sacrifices are mentioned in the sacred volume, and we shall see how far they are from including the idea of punishment.

We find an instance of this use of the term so early as Deut. xxxiii. 19: "They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand." Sacrifices of righteousness, undoubtedly, imply the worship of the Lord from righteous feelings and emotions. The Psalmist still more definitely points to the spiritual idea to which sacrifices correspond, when he says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." Here, undoubtedly, the true sacrifices of God are described to be a spirit in which pride is broken, a heart in which sin is subdued. The adoration and devotion of hearts like these are the sacrifices of righteousness, or justice; and when this is done from the fire of a love which glows and burns first in the inward spirit, and then throughout the whole soul, it is a burnt offering, and a whole burnt offering, acceptable to the Lord. The passage in the previous Psalm, "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High" (chap. l. 14), evidently

speaks of the offerings of a grateful heart. In Psalm cvii. 22, there is another reference to the same interior offerings. "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

In the New Testament, a similar signification of sacrifices is evident. There is a striking example in the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle says, "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" (chap. xii. 1). Here it is most evident, the idea of sacrifice is that of offering ourselves up to the worship of God, by doing His will. We are not to destroy ourselves, or to punish our bodies, but to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, to become holy and acceptable to God. Again: in the Epistle to the Philippians, we find the apostle saying, "I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God" (chap. iv. 18), where it is evident the idea of sacrificing is offering from the heart. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written, "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (chap. xiii. 16). The apostle Peter speaks in like manner, when he says of Christians, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. ii. 5. From all this, therefore, we may clearly gather that the general idea of all sacrifices is not punishment, but self-dedication and worship of the inner heart and life. It is true, the animals which were offered up in the representative worship of the Jews were previously slain, but this was not as a punishment, but a preparation for the sacrifice, and part of the type. It was representative of that destruction of selfishness which must be effected in us before we can offer ourselves up to the Lord's will. This self-denial is very strikingly placed before us by the Lord, when He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."—Luke ix. 23, 24. This important truth was shadowed forth also in the place for sacrifice and for washing, being the outer court of the tabernacle, not in the holy place, nor in the holy of holies (Exod. xl. 29, 30). The lesson intended by this is we presume clearly this, that our entry into the church can only be really made by the purification of our minds, and the destruc-

tion of self-will in our hearts. And this is the very truth. The Lord said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me:" and this is the indispensable lesson to be learned by us all. We must be washed, made clean from our evils; we must take up our cross daily, and lose our selfish life, or we can offer no sacrifice that will be acceptable to Him who sanctified Himself, that we may be sanctified by the truth.

O may this lesson be deeply impressed upon all who contemplate the subject now before us. First may we renounce our selfish life, and become contrite in spirit, and broken in heart, and then offer up our whole talents, powers and faculties, a whole burnt sacrifice of loving service, to the Will of Him, whose service is perfect freedom.

But secondly, the objects offered up were correspondences of good principles. The animals used in the sacrifices were, lambs, sheep, oxen, goats, turtle-doves and pigeons, and a consideration of the typical character of each will assist us to confirm the truth of our first proposition. For, surely, it is more natural to conclude that these different animals are the types of different principles, and their being offered up the dedication of these to the Lord, than to suppose that, though there was so great variety in the sacrifices, there was no variety in the things signified: they are related to the one act of the Lord's death upon the cross, regarded as a punishment for our sins. Let us endeavour to take a wider view, and first enquire into the typical character of the animals in question. They are often referred to in the Word of God. The lamb is used there as the symbol of innocence, and is so expressive of this grace, that it is almost a household word; for those who are in possession of it. "I send you forth," said our Lord, "as *lambs*, in the midst of wolves." Sheep are the types of the gentle principles of charity, or sympathizing brotherly love. The sheep described by the Lord Jesus in Matt. xxv. were those who had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and the prisoners, and succoured the strangers. "Inasmuch as ye did these things," said the Divine Saviour, "to the least of these my brethren, you did them unto me."

Oxen are the types of the dispositions to duty and obedience. It was the animal chiefly devoted to the plough, and ploughing, in the spiritual sense, meant the preparation of the soul to receive the knowledge of heavenly things.

The true method to prepare for fresh instruction is to practise what we already know. Our Lord has a remarkable declaration in allusion to spiritual ploughing. "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom

of God.”—Luke ix. 62. There is also a remarkable passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, which becomes however very expressive when we apply the correspondence of the ox, the principle of obedience. “Blessed are ye who sow beside all waters, who send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.”—chap. xxxii. 20. Blessed, indeed, are they who having a spirit to obey, the ox, and to progress in the faith of truth, though it be only in the letter of the Word—the ass, yet go to the waters of salvation, and strengthen and purify their lives thereby. Blessed are they. The goat, whose delight is in leaping from rock to rock, is the symbol of the disposition to regard the truths of faith with great pleasure, which sometimes degenerates into a love of faith only, and then is strongly condemned by the Lord (Ezek. xxxiv.; Matt. xxv.) Birds, from their soaring power, are the symbols of thoughts. Turtle-doves and pigeons are correspondences of those tender thoughts and yearning after the heavenly life which the soul has in the early part of its regeneration. The cooing of the turtle-dove was first heard in the groves of Palestine, on the return of spring. Its sweet sound was the sign of the approach of a brighter and warmer season. When the soul, therefore, is coming to a more genial condition, the sweet thoughts of hope and trust that encourage its advance towards the heavenly state and kingdom, are like the soft notes of a God-sent turtle-dove. All these types, then, of good affections and thoughts, as well as the mode of offering up by fire, abundantly confirm the view we have drawn from the Holy Word, that the sacrifices were representative of good things and principles, dedicated to the Lord in worship, not of punishment for human sin.

But we will proceed to examine more closely the particular sacrifice before us, that of fowls.

Birds, in general, correspond to thoughts. That man in his intellectual part has a power of soaring into lofty subjects, far beyond the state he has already attained in practice, is evident to every one. We can think much better than we can do. And this is owing to the freedom Divine Mercy has preserved for our thoughts, even when our hearts are still the slaves of sin. This free intellectual power is represented in nature by the free flight of birds, the lofty elevation they can reach, and the extensive survey they can make. The gentle birds correspond to gentle thoughts, the destructive birds to pernicious thoughts. When on a bright sunny morning we take a walk in the fields, and watch the lark soaring high over head, and pouring out her flood of melodious song, still rising higher and still warbling more sweetly, while her song thrills on, we feel conscious of a

power to ascend to things divine. We, too, would soar and sing. And when we observe that the bird of loftiest flight, and sweetest song, has the lowest nest, we can scarcely fail to read the lesson, that he who has the lowest thoughts of himself, can most loftily enter into the things of heaven, and most sweetly utter, and deeply feel what is expressed in those glowing words of grateful love: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me; bless his holy name."

In the Scriptures, birds are constantly used as correspondences. "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped."—Ps. cxxiv. 7. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed 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."—Matt. xiii. 31, 32. The birds which lodge in the branches of the heavenly tree can of course only represent heavenly thoughts. When the Lord says in Hosea: "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground, and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely."—chap. ii. 18. A very slight reflection will enable us to perceive that the beasts, *fowls*, and creeping things, are analogies of principles in the mental world. With these alone can the Divine Being make such a covenant as will issue in a world at peace.

But turtle-doves and pigeons are used with great frequency in the Divine Word in relation to spiritual things. "O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever."—Ps. lxxiv. 19. Where, it is obvious, that by the turtle-dove is meant the state of his soul, tenderly yearning after what is good. "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest" (Ps. lv. 6), is a breathing after the same heavenward thoughts and aspirations. There is a beautiful use of this correspondence of the dove in Ps. lxxviii. 13: "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." The soul rising from a condition of depression and trial, is depicted, and entering upon thoughts consolatory, sweet and delightful; her wings covered with the silver of spiritual intelligence and comforts soft as feathers, and breathing the very essence of holy love, the gold of heaven. In the early portion of the Word, the dove that was

sent out of the ark, and could not find a place, for a time, for the sole of her foot, was a figure of the state of things when falsehood floods the earth, though God always saves a few from the general wreck. He gives them the ark of a saving religion, which preserves them from the desolation around. Their soft and gentle thoughts meet with rejection when they try to put them forth. Only slowly, and after repeated trial, can the dove find any welcome in the world.

When the prophet is describing the last and best dispensation of religion which God will impart to mankind, he speaks of those who yearn after heavenly things who will come out of the world around to hail and receive it, when he says: "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" The adorable Jesus, in a very striking passage, uses the same correspondence of dove: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, but harmless as doves;" where we are taught that we should be circumspect to avoid danger from evil, and gentle in all our thoughts. From these multiplied instances, it is clear that the Divine Word uses birds as correspondences of thoughts; doves, especially of soft and heavenly thoughts, and of those persons who cherish such thoughts and delight in them. The Holy Spirit was seen, we are informed in Matthew, to descend upon the Saviour like a dove, because in the world of vision, or spirit world, into which those who beheld the heavenly dove were permitted for the moment to see, all things around the inhabitants are the exact correspondences of the states within them, and, because the humanity of the Lord had then attained a more full union with the Father, and consequent reception of the divine views of tenderness and love towards the human race, the dove appeared over Him as the correspondence of this.

From these considerations it will not be difficult to perceive the reason for the divine command, that if fowls be offered in sacrifice, they shall consist of turtle-doves or of pigeons.

For what worthier offering could be made, than that which typified man's yearning towards a holier state? When the sense of the insufficiency of earth to satisfy the angelic demands of our immortal part are felt, when we are sensible how poor are earth's grandest things, and we have begun to hunger and thirst after righteousness. When we have heard the Divine invitation, "Arise, for this is not your rest, for the whole land is polluted," and thoughts of love, and hope that whispers better things, make themselves heard within, these are the voices of spiritual turtle-doves which are the heralds of summer in the soul. The later and larger birds, the pigeons, which in Palestine

were singularly beautiful, their feathers having the colours of the rainbow, are the types of the more matured thoughts of the soul, when more fully confirmed in rational prospects and views of heaven. When Peter was confirmed in his adherence to his Lord, he was called Simon, son of Jonas, by the Saviour; and when he uttered the declaration that the Lord's Humanity was divine, "the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16.) his Master said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona," flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven (ver. 17.), both Jonas and Jona being only other forms of the Hebrew, joneh, pigeon. Peter is described as the son of the pigeon, then, in harmony with the correspondence of that bird to thoughts of heavenly things, such as they are in the mind of a person who is in true faith. When, therefore, the sacrifice of birds, is directed to be of turtle-doves, or pigeons, we may now readily see the reason. In adoring the Lord, for our thoughts, we must do so especially for those, our choicest and best, which have their home in heaven. We must bless Him for all things, but chiefly for "the things which belong to our peace." The Lord said, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life," and this ordinance of the sacrifice of fowls implies worship not from thoughts which have earth for their object, but from thoughts which tend to regeneration, and to heaven. Let no vain fancies, or idle dreams intrude in your approaches to the King of kings; let your sacrifices be of the turtle-doves, or of the pigeons of those spiritual aspirations which soar towards the home of the angels, and rejoice in the glories above.

The priest, it is said, shall bring it to the altar, and wring off its head, and burn it upon the altar. By burning the head completely on the altar, is indicated the acknowledgement from the heart, and with an earnest spirit of love,—the fire upon the altar, that all our good thoughts originate from the Lord, and are His. The accessories come to us in various ways, and sometimes are mixed with fallacies and mistakes derived, it may be, from our association with some erroneous form of faith, for blessed be the Divine mercy, salvation is possible under every form, but the head is wholly the Lord's. "All my springs are in thee."

The next proceeding of the priest was to wring out the blood on the side of the altar, and this reminds us of the frequent use of blood in a striking symbolical manner. The blood of the Paschal lamb was directed to be sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of the Israelitish houses in Egypt, that the destroyer of the first-born might not enter (Ex. xii. 23). There are express

directions given in relation to each sacrifice, whether the blood should be sprinkled on the sides, or poured at the bottom of the altar. These circumstances will no doubt lead the Christian to think of that blood of the Lamb which purifies the conscience, washes our spiritual robes, and maketh them white, and without drinking of which we have no everlasting life. This blood is Divine Truth from the Lord. "The blood of the New Testament," He calls it Himself, "which is shed for many for the remission of sins." No outward blood can affect the conscience, or impart purity to the soul. Only Truth, inwardly seen and felt, can do that. The Word learned, loved, and sent on its mission through the soul, is the blood that cleanses. Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you. We are "sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19. The union of truth with goodness, which takes place when we worship the Lord, was represented by the blood sprinkled, or wrung out, on the side of the altar.

The priest next was to pluck away the crop, with the feathers, and cast it beside the altar on the east side. And this takes us to a most important consideration. The crop, being the bird's depository of food before it is digested, corresponds to the memory, in man. Instruction in the memory before it has been digested in the rational faculty, and made our own in practice, is like food in the crop. When we die, such knowledge in the memory is of no avail in the sight of God, and is rejected. In the eternal world, knowledge passeth away (1. Cor. xiii. 8). Only the principles of truth and goodness remain, which we have made our own, by doing what we know to be according to the Divine Will. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," said our adorable Lord, and so it undoubtedly is.

The religion of the memory, is alas, all that is possessed by a large portion of those who call themselves Christians. They have read and heard, possibly much upon this all-important subject. They have admitted as right, what religion claims. They can speak on religious themes, it may be fluently, but the tone and temper of their minds are contrary to its hallowed precepts, and their lives are uninfluenced by its laws. The words of religion they have learned, but they are foreign to its Divine spirit of love and virtue. Theirs is the religion of the crop and feathers, and these will be rejected to the very externals of the soul, as ashes. Alas, what will be left.

The east side of the altar, signifies out of regard to the Will of the Lord, for the east corresponds to a state of love to Him, the Sun of Righteousness. Some, there are, who diligently

store the memory with languages, and pass for learned and wise, among men. They give no heed, however, to enter into and understand the great things of which languages are but the vehicles. Take them beyond the words, and they are at once out of their depth. They do not cultivate their reason, and seek light to live for the sublime objects of eternity. Words, words, words, are almost all they know. When they are stripped of these feathers of thought, by coming into a world where none of the languages of earth are utterable, where thought itself must speak, what must be their helplessness! How will the wise become stupid! How will the eloquent be struck dumb! How will the fluent in words, but careless of intellect, find that a light prevails which they have hated, a language is uttered which they have not practised, and like spiritual owls, they will fly from the light of the eternal world, muttering the indistinct emptiness of souls, really insane.

O may this state never be ours! But on the contrary, may our happy diligence warrant us to say with the prophet, "When I found thy Word, I did eat it, and it was the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Then, when all the words, and the memory of our earthly part, are closed up and laid aside, we may find treasures of wisdom in our inner man, treasures of gratitude, of love to the Lord, of righteousness, and every angelic grace which will then inspire us with true heavenly eloquence. O my beloved hearers, forget not the express words of the Lord, "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Luke xii. 33, 34.

There is a remarkable injunction still remaining to be considered. The bird being sacrificed was to be cleaved, but not so far as to be divided. In the case of Abraham's sacrifice in his vision (Gen. xv. 9, 10), God said to him, "Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another, but *the birds divided he not*. In the case of the beasts which represent good dispositions in the heart, there was a full division, and placing of the pieces parallel, over against one another. There was an answering of each to each. They are as the two sides of the covenant. The Lord imparts goodness to man from within, man receives it. On the one side, the Lord conjoins him to Himself by it, on the other side man obeys. There is a correspondence and communion be-

tween them. "Abide in me," the Lord says, "and I in you." This takes place by means of goodness in the regenerated will. The thoughts of man are not susceptible of this close parallelism with the Divine Truth, nor is it essential they should be so. There may be many fallacies, and errors in his thoughts, yet he may be guided in the right direction. The religion of fear may help a man out of a brutal life, although his ideas of God are grossly mistaken. There is in them a saving side, an acknowledgement of the authority of God, and His right to govern. There is submission given. He allows the claims of heaven in a certain way, although not as they are truly taught by the Divine Truth itself. This was represented by the birds being cloven, but not divided, and laid one side over against the other. This want of exact resemblance between God's truth, and man's thought may continue during man's whole life in the world, and yet God accepts his sacrifice. Full correspondence will only be effected in that world, of which it is written, "Whosoever hath to him shall be given, and whosoever hath not from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."—Luke v. 18.

Lastly, the offering is made upon wood, by means of the fire, and wood also has its correspondence. It is the type of good, of almost the lowest kind, a regard for orderly bodily habits. This furnishes the framework of religion. "Whether we eat, or whether we drink, we should do it all to the glory of God." Our spiritual sacrifices should be made upon wood. When the waters of Marah were bitter, Moses was commanded to cast wood into them, and they became sweet. The waters of truth, are ever hard and bitter, until we unite them with the good which delights in reducing them to life. If, however, this be there, even in the lowest degree, we are on the road to that blessed enrichment in all heavenly graces of which it is written, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, brass, and for stones, iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness."—Is. lx. 17.

We have now briefly considered all the particulars of this divine law. Its divine lessons come out by means of the correspondences, and are most deeply interesting. May I not ask you, my beloved hearers, if you have no spiritual sacrifice to make? Have not the turtle-dove, or the young pigeon of heavenward thoughts, begun to make themselves heard within you? Have you no yearnings after a better land? Have you not felt the aspirations after a fuller conformity to the Lord, after greater purity of heart, and greater usefulness on earth? If you have, follow their leadings, and offer them up to the Lord, in love. Let

the fire glow on the altar of your heart. Acknowledge that these first yearnings for good are from Him. He will not despise the gift, but bless it, as an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto the Lord.

We have observed, that so far from the idea of sacrifices being regarded as symbolical of punishment by the Divine Being, the truth is, that outward sacrifices never were in accordance with the Divine command, but were mere permissions to serve as types during the human darkness and degeneracy.

A common idea has been entertained, that outward sacrifices are frequently commanded by God, and He originated the divine arrangement with the Israelites; but this is altogether an error. Sacrifices were prevalent among the nations of the East, before God spoke from Sinai at all. Pharaoh told the Hebrews they could sacrifice in his land, before a single law respecting sacrifice was given them (Ex. viii. 25). In the Book of Leviticus, where the laws respecting sacrifices are all expressly given, they do not command sacrifices, they only regulate them. The language is, "If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord," as in ver. 2. "If his offering be of the flocks" (ver. 10). "If the burnt sacrifice for the offering of the Lord be of fowls" (ver. 14), and so on through the book, evidently implying no command but regulation. The Israelitish people, like all their neighbours, had sunk from worshipping God in the heart and mind, with those affections and thoughts to which animals are the figures and correspondences, and were only too ready to offer up animals instead of offering up themselves. God only regulated this disposition to be a shadow of a better worship to come. The graces of the heart are what God requires, not the slaughter of animals. This is very distinctly stated in the prophets. Jeremiah says: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you."—chap. vii. 22, 23. Nothing can be clearer than that outward sacrifices are not of command, but only of permission. God commands inward and living virtues alone. The prophet Samuel taught the same truth to Saul, when the unhappy king thought he would be sure to do right if he sacrificed: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams."—1 Sam. xv. 22. The proposition now

before us seems to be placed beyond all doubt by the glorious passage in Micah, where the divine requirements are declared in terms the most sublime and lucid: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."—chap. vi. 7, 8. Nothing can surely be clearer from this declaration than that outward sacrifices are not required by the Divine Being. He needs no purchase of his mercy, nor reconciliation from anger to favour. He is mercy itself, and unchangeable Love itself. All He requires is, that we should be brought to become like Him, and thus enabled to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. Let us never suppose, then, that any sacrifice will be acceptable to Him, instead of that devotion of all the principles of the soul to do His holy Will, which is the inward meaning of all the sacrifices.

Lastly, to enable us to do this, and thus to return to the order of heaven, and to offer spiritual sacrifices again, the Lord Himself took Human Nature upon Himself, and purified, perfected, and glorified this, so that all the sacrifices have their highest fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, and the Supreme Sacrifice.

On this subject, we should first remember that the Lord Jesus took our nature to become God-with-us. He took our nature as it is, in order that He might be tempted in all respects like unto His brethren.

This assumption of Human Nature in its fallen character, had objects in view not at all inferior to Creation itself. The whole spiritual world was in a disorganized state, and all things tended to mental ruin. The world of spirits, with which man is more immediately connected, was swarming with the powers of darkness. Not only the souls of men were in slavery, but in many cases, their bodies also. The Lord had governed the human race hitherto through angels (Heb. ii. 2), and under this government all these evils had arisen. To avert utter ruin to His immortal creatures, it was necessary He should come immediately into the presence of His creatures, as a Redeemer and Saviour.

First. That God Himself might become known to them

from His own words and acts, as a Being of Infinite Love, whose tender mercies were over all His works.

Secondly. That He might through His assumed Humanity throw down the powers of darkness, and place man again in spiritual freedom (Luke x. 18).

Thirdly. That by glorifying or perfecting this Humanity, He might lead us as an example in the path of the Regeneration.

Fourthly. That this perfected Human Nature might be a medium, or Mediator between Himself and His creatures for ever, to give salvation and strength to the penitent, and to hold hell in subjection. (Matt. xxviii. 18. Rev. i. 17, 18.)

Fifthly. That He might found His church on the great truth, that His perfected Humanity was divine, and through it, God and man might for ever be conjoined as church and Head, as children and Father, as Saviour and saved, as Shepherd and sheep. Such were the great objects of the incarnation of Jehovah, worthy of Infinite Love, and necessary for the everlasting salvation of the human race. Creation itself would have become valueless had it not been followed by Redemption. Hence the importance attributed to the work of Redemption in the Word, especially in the prophecy of Isaiah (chap. xxxv. ; chap. xlv. 11 ; chap. xlix. 24, 25).

Now, we have seen that in relation to man, the sacrifices represent the dedication of the several principles of his nature to the Divine will, by the destruction of selfishness in him, and his consequent regeneration.

In our blessed Lord, this sanctification of His Humanity was far higher, it was the making of it Divine, and thus the Supreme sacrifice. He had the same principles in His Humanity, which we have in ours, thus He had the innocence represented by the lamb, the charity of which the sheep is the symbol, the obedience typified by the ox, the desire for faith of which the goat is the emblem, the thought and yearnings for the salvation of the human race represented by the turtledoves and young pigeons. As His Humanity was from Jehovah interiorly, being the Son of God, but clothed with infirm coverings from His mother, He needed to sanctify and perfect it by a process precisely similar to that, by means of which His children are prepared for heaven. Hence, in looking to the Lord as sacrificed for us, we should not confine our view to His cross. This was but the last act in His struggle with the powers of darkness (Luke xxii. 53 ; Heb. ii. 14). His life was a constant series of sacrifices ; of the glorifying of His Humanity, first as to one principle, and then as to another. He glorified it, again and again (John xii. 28). He

was the Lamb of God as to the innocence of His Humanity, and this, when sanctified from the imperfections assumed from the mother Mary, became so filled and permeated by the Divine love, as to become a whole burnt offering, not destroyed, but perfected, and glowing with the glories of the Godhead for ever. He was the Dove of God, as to the meek wisdom of His Humanity, and when He was baptized from the limitations of mere human imperfections, from his association with our nature, fallen as He took it at first (Luke xii. 50), then He became altogether a sacrifice of a turtledove, the blood of His Divine Wisdom sanctified the altar, the crop and feathers of mere materiality were rejected, and He became in this respect an offering made by fire, a sweet savour unto Jehovah. He entered into His glory by sufferings, of which his death on the cross was the last, but not the first—these sufferings were not to be regarded as punishments from another divine person, but as means of glorification, submitted to by His Divine Love for man, that He might offer Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 4), and that we might afterwards be sanctified “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”—(Heb. x. 10.)

Christ, our Passover, was then sacrificed for us in a wider, and fuller sense, than has often been supposed. And He is now a new and living way, “which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.”—(Heb. x. 20.) Through this way, all the blessings of Divine Mercy, Strength, Light and Joy, descend to us. O may we look to this door of the Godhead with adoration and reverence. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He is Divine Love, in a Divine Body. He that seeth Him seeth the Father. Through the glorification of the Son is the entire likeness of the Eternal Father in Him, and it can be truly said, as the apostle remarks, “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”—Heb. i. 8, 9.) All the angels worship this glorified Redeemer, let us worship Him too. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”—(Rev. v. 12.)

Surely, my beloved friends, we may now appreciate those divine words, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”—(Ps. cxix. 18.)

The law thus seen, is indeed what the Psalmist declared it to be, better than thousands of gold and silver “Blessed is he

whose delight is in the law of the Lord ; and in his law doth meditate, day and night." Each precept opens to the mind some spiritual duty, and invites to holier devotedness. By this interesting divine ordinance, we are led to contemplate the duty of worshipping the Lord in our thoughts, as well as in our hearts. We are invited to "praise the Lord with beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl."—Ps. cxlviii. 10. While, then, we are delighted to find, in our spiritual pilgrimage, we are not left solitary, and songless, but as we go on, we have happy thoughts, soaring and singing around us, and above us, like birds of heaven, let us gratefully confess all these are from the Lord. Let us devote them to Him. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Is. xl. 31. Let us glorify the Lord for our birds. Let us make them a living sacrifice to Him, filled with adoring love. He originates them, the head is wholly His. He desires that the truth which forms their inward life, should be united to the good from which we adore our heavenly Father, the altar of our hearts. Let us thus pour the blood upon the side of the altar.

Let us never forget, too, that all our power, to fulfil the law, in our spirits, comes from the divine sacrifice of Him, who lived and died for us. Had He not assumed and glorified His Humanity, there was no help for man. The Holy Ghost was not given, until Jesus was glorified. All the law, as well as the prophets, pointed to this great work. He was the end of the law for righteousness. The lamb that was slain, the serpent that was lifted up, the turtle-dove that was sacrificed, all supremely shadowed Him who lived, and died, and rose again, "that He might be Lord of the dead and the living."—Rom. xiv. 9. Let all the powers of our minds be consecrated to ponder upon this dedication of the Human to the Divine in the Saviour, until the Divine Love, as an Infinite Fire, filled it wholly, and made it a whole burnt sacrifice, a savour of mercy, the Head of all things, to heaven and the church for ever.

SERMON VIII.

THE LAW OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

"Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps."—Numb. x. 2.

REVELATION, is to man, as a trumpet-call from heaven; hence the prophets are often told to lift up their voices like a trumpet. The human race is a grand army of immortals. The journey of life is a series of marches intended by the Captain of our salvation to terminate in heaven. But whether this journey will be successfully accomplished or not, depends upon our faithfulness to the directions of our Divine Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are His soldiers, and if we obey the proclamations of His mercy and wisdom, as given in His word, we are certain of success. If not, we shall miss our way, and fall victims to the enemies who wait around, ready to fall upon the heedless and disobedient. The law of the silver trumpets is the law of the nature, uses, and objects of Divine revelation, when it is seen and felt as the utterance of Divine love, and the authorized guide and director of our journey to heaven.

We have mentioned, that to sound a trumpet, is, in the language of the Word, to deliver a revelation. When the law was given on Sinai, there was "the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled exceedingly."—Ex. xix. 16. The same correspondence of the sounding of a trumpet to the delivery of revelation, very clearly appears in the prophecy of Ezekiel: "Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him.

But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me."—Ezek. xxxiii. 2—7. The blowing of a trumpet is here, manifestly, the type of the delivering divine warning and revelation. To the prophet Hosea it was said, "Set the trumpet to thy mouth."—Hosea viii. 1. When the prophet Isaiah speaks of the gospel dispensation, he says, "In that day, the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."—Isa. xxvii. 13. The great trumpet is here, no doubt, the great revelation of divine truth in the Gospel. By its means, those who were ready to perish in states of perverted reasoning like the soaring Assyrians, or of perverted science, like the magic-loving mysterious Egyptians, should be saved by following the joyful sound of life and immortality in the Gospel.

The Lord God shall blow the trumpet, it is said, in Ezek. ix. 6. And in the book of Revelation, the disclosure of truth from heaven is called the sounding of one of the seven trumpets by one of the seven angels (Rev. viii. 2). The call of man from earth to the eternal world is likened to the sounding of a trumpet—"The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."—1 Cor. xv. 52. In all these cases, the trumpet is the symbol of divine revelation, as the utterance of the love of the Almighty to lead, or warn, or call man to Himself. To represent divine revelation in these respects was the purpose of the law we are now considering.

Divine revelation in its letter takes a hard and earthly form, sometimes. From it, weapons of fierce spiritual war can be formed; and in this respect, it is said, "The sword of the spirit is the Word of God."—Eph. vi. 17. But the silver trumpets represent the Word in its spiritual beauty and lustre, which, as compared to the letter, is as silver compared to iron. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."—Ps. xii. 6. When the Lord came into the world as our Saviour, He did so to introduce as far as then possible to mankind the spirit of heavenly wisdom,

instead of the mere teaching of the letter, such as was all the Jews had known. This is declared in that magnificent passage in the prophecy of Isaiah: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness."—Isa. lx. 17. No thoughtful Christian will suppose that the Lord came, or ever comes, to increase our earthly gold and silver. He comes rather to wean our attachments from the splendours of earth, to fix them upon the more lasting gold of inward heavenly love; to the silver, far more lasting and brilliant, of inward heavenly wisdom; for iron I will bring silver. When the Lord is refining the character in the work of regeneration, to raise us to purity of thought and feeling, it is said, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."—Mal. iii. 3. And here we may remark, how appropriate silver is as a correspondence to spiritual wisdom. It is white, brilliant and precious. So is the spiritual meaning of the Word. When the letter is at first dark and difficult to us, but is at length duly opened, and we see the spirit glittering, as it were, within; it is, indeed, to the mental eye like silver, beautiful, bright, and unspeakably precious. O may its sweet and silvery lessons be to us as dearest treasure. To teach us then, that it is the spiritual sense of Divine Revelation, which is intended to guide us, guard us, and call us to heaven, the trumpets were made of silver.

They were two in number, but formed of one piece. The whole spirit of the Word is expressive of love to the Lord, and charity to man. "Jesus said unto him, 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."—Matt. xxii. 37—40. To represent this twofold character of the spirit of the Word, then, there were two silver trumpets, not one only. Yet they were both formed out of one piece. For, indeed, the truth that we should love our neighbour, comes from the grander truth, that we should supremely love the Lord. The apostle John states this very clearly, when he writes, "And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also."—1 John iv. 21. And again: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth

Him also that is begotten of Him.”—2 John v. 1. Both silver trumpets were made of one piece, to represent to us, that both the grand commandments originate in the love we have for Him who is Love itself. The love and contemplation of His character, and excellencies, lead us to imitate Him; also to love His children, who are His works, and in our spheres to be centres of good, and blessing to all around us, as He is to the whole universe. The two great spiritual truths which form the essence of the Word, spring from the one, that we are to love, the fountain of all good. The two silver trumpets were made of one piece.

Another idea is intimated by this command to make them of one piece. That, namely, of the entire harmony of the spiritual sense of the Word, with itself. The letter, which is given, for the natural man, and intended to rouse him both by appeals to his curiosity, to his fears, and to his hopes, is expressed often in the language of appearance. The punishments which assuredly follow disobedience to law, and which the evil man supposes to be inflicted by God, although, in reality, they come from himself, are, in the letter of the Bible, ascribed to God, to give to the sinner the certainty of their infliction. Because, also, they do come from opposition to those laws which Infinite Love and Wisdom gave to the universe, and sustains in it. The letter of the Word is varied in its style, according to the age, and the circumstances in which its several parts were revealed. But the spiritual sense is free from these irregularities. It is harmonious throughout. It speaks ever in accordance with genuine truth. It is bright and coherent everywhere. It is silver, all of one piece.

But let us turn now from the composition of the trumpets, to their use.

Firstly. They were to be used to call the people to the assemblies. “And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”—ver. 3.

Secondly. They were to excite to, and direct the journey of the people. “When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.”—verses 5, 6.

Thirdly. The trumpets were to be sounded, when an enemy appeared in their land to oppress them. “And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye

shall blow an alarm with the trumpets ; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."—ver. 9.

Fourthly. The trumpets were to be blown on the days of rejoicing. "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginning of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings ; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God. I am the Lord your God."—ver. 10.

Let us now consider the lessons which these uses of the silver trumpets were designed to indicate in relation to our Christian journey, and Christian duties.

The first use of the trumpets then was to call the assemblies to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, there to hear the will and decisions of the Most High. In like manner we are called by the silver trumpets of the Word to assemble together in the name and in the presence of that glorified Divine Man who said, "I am the door ; by me, if any man shall enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—John x. 9. The whole spirit of the Word calls us to worship Him, and to learn of Him. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. xix. 10). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, were all types of Him ; some in one respect, some in another. One shadows Him forth as the Father ; another, as the conquering Saviour ; another, as the King of his people. The silver note of the spiritual trumpets calls us to Him, and assures us, that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be in the midst of them. They will find him the door to every blessing. Light flows from Him. "He is the true Light which enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world."—John i. 9. Love comes from Him. We love Him, because He first loved us. Power to vanquish evil comes from Him. "Without Him we can do nothing."—John xv. 5. He feeds the soul with goodness, He is the bread of life. He gives fortitude and perseverance in our souls' conflicts. He watches over our struggles, and says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10. "He is, indeed, Lord of all."—Acts x. 36. And to all who have fully enrolled themselves among the Israel of God, "Christ is all in all."—Col. iii. 11. Before every other duty, then, the silver trumpets call us to the Divine Door of the Godhead. Let us ever joyfully listen and obey. From the Lord Jesus we shall derive acceptance, comfort, and courage. "Come unto me," he says, "and I will give you rest." The love of God manifest

in His becoming our Redeemer, is so great, that we cannot doubt of it; we cannot despair. He who came to earth, to seek and to save that which was lost, will not reject us when we go to Him. O no: He on the contrary said, "Whosoever will come unto me I will in no wise cast him out." When, then, in care and in sorrow, in weakness and fear, in the darkness of doubt, or tossed on the waves of anguish, we remember our high capabilities as heirs of immortality, destined for heaven, let us hear, with hearts energetic from hope, the sound of the silver trumpets, which call us to the door of the tabernacle of the Godhead.

When we have been to the Lord Jesus Christ in worship, and to learn His will, we shall find the second use of the silver trumpets will be unfolded to us. We must march on. Regeneration is a journey, in which we advance from state to state, as from stage to stage in outward travel. We begin in Egypt, we must reach Canaan. The silvery music will call us forward. The import of its sound is this, Arise, for this is not your rest, for the whole land is polluted. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon thee."—Is. lx. 1. Arise, child of heaven, from the selfishness, and darkness in which thou hast been enshrouded. Arise from the slavery and pollution of sin, to the glorious liberty of the children of light. Move on.

But, let us notice the order prescribed for the march. "When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward." The spiritual Sun is the Lord. "Unto you that fear my name, saith the Lord, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."—Mal. iv. 2. The east, where the sun rises, is expressive in spiritual language of that reverence and love for the Lord in which He rises, and shines over the soul. Love turns the soul to its Saviour, and He is ever ready to shed a new rosy morning of beauty and blessing over the humbled heart and contrite spirit.

"O blest be His name who in sorrow's stern hour,
Hears the prayer of affliction, and sends forth His power,
Like the moon o'er the valley, night-shadowed and dim,
O'er the heart breathes the spirit of mercy from Him.
Bless, bless His name."

The garden of Eden was said to be planted in the east. The glory of the God of Israel came to the temple Ezekiel saw in vision, from the east. The wise men came from the east to worship the Lord. In all these cases and in every other where the east is spoken of in the Word, it corresponds to a state of love to God, in the heart, except when a condition of things opposite to the heavenly one is described, when man idol-

izes himself as a sun, and then the east to such a sun describes the love of self, which leads to the most despicable idolatry.

The camps on the east side were to move at the first sound of the silver trumpets, to teach us that in our heavenly journey we should always move from love. My son, give me thy heart, says Divine Wisdom. Without the heart turning to God, and striving for heaven, there is no real progress. Let the camps on the east side move forward, when the spirit of the Holy Word is heard, calling us sweetly to advance; and "Blessed is the people, that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance."—Ps. lxxxix. 15.

Next, however, it is said, "When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey." The south is the quarter where the sun is at noon, when he throws his greatest splendour over the earth, and it represents a state of the soul in great heavenly light. When we look to the east, the south is the right hand side. Hence both these terms are used, in the spiritual language of the Word, to express states of illumination. Thus in Psalm cxxvi. 4, "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south." The streams in the south, are the free flowing waters of heavenly intelligence. The holy waters which the prophet Ezekiel beheld came from the south side of the altar (xlvi. 1). When the Psalmist describes a state of deep suffering in temptation, he writes, "And I said, This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."—Ps. lxxvii. 10. To remember the years of the right hand, is to remember the states of previous light, and joy, to be comforted when all is blank and dreary with the treasured remembrances of days gone by; in which a holy light shed its cheer over the mind, and we basked in the favour of heaven. To teach us, then, that while the heart moves on, the intellect must follow, it is said at the second alarm, "let the south side go on their journey."

The lesson indicated by this portion of our subject has, alas, been often strangely neglected. In some cases as strangely denied, as if religion were not a thing of light, as well as a thing of love. The Divine Being, however, shews us by this law, his desire that our understandings should be enlightened, as well as the heart warmed. In fact, this He has ever done. In the Old Testament, His servants were taught to say, "The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" Again: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow: though

they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."—Is. i. 18. That the reason of man should be enlightened equally with his heart, being purified, has ever been the doctrine of revelation. Indeed, the truth we do not understand has not yet a fixed home and influence in the mind.

The Lord Jesus said, "When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside."—*Matt.* xiii. 19. The Word understood and loved, is the Word that saves. Hence, while the heart is ever the most important in the divine estimation, the eyes are also ever directed to be opened and used. As the heart becomes purer, the eyes will be more fully brought into the light. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." These, then, are the truths which are indicated by the movement of the eastern side of the host forward on their journey, and then the advance of the south.

Next we are carried forward to the contemplation of the third use of the trumpets; to sound an alarm when the enemies within the land seek to oppress.

When the Israelites commenced their journey after their passage of the Red Sea, it was under circumstances of great splendour and joy. The Egyptians, their former cruel oppressors, had sunk in the Red Sea, and would be seen no more. They beheld the guiding pillars of a cloud by day and fire by night leading them on, and they expected a speedy and triumphant entrance into the land which was to be their final and glorious inheritance. When, however, they commenced their march, the realities they found were very different from their glowing anticipations. Dangers and distresses lay before them. Enemies hovered around them. Many a toil had to be endured. Many a struggle for life and progress entered upon. Forty years of chequered pain and pleasure, must be passed. Sometimes glorious scenes, and sometimes terrible enemies were discovered by them, ere they came to Jordan. And when they entered the promised land, they found it was inhabited by polluted and idolatrous tribes, which could only be driven out by little and little. It was only in the time of Solomon that they could be said to have obtained full, final, and peaceful possession.

All this is the exact type of the Christian's hopes and the Christian's journey. We begin our regeneration by forsaking the grosser sins to which we have been accustomed, and we think we have left all that is offensive in the sight of heaven. We are full of joy at having broken our bonds. We spring forward with

alacrity. Divine mercy gives us an abundance of high delight, and happy feelings. Angels rejoice with us. The veil of the future hides from us the trials which yet lie before us, and we anticipate in our new career only a succession of peaceful and happy states. We have felt the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered (Ps. xxxii. 1). We suppose our evils are all obliterated, and henceforth there is no struggle before us, but only peaceful triumph. We think we are wholly given up to God and goodness, and so we shall continue. Alas! we have in this but little conception of the wonderful nature with which we are endowed, or of the extent of the ramifications of evil. Each mind is a world in ruins. The soul is organized more astonishingly even than the body, and each organ or principle is more or less perverted. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. From the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, we are full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. Could we see ourselves as we really are, we should shudder at the view. No sudden transformation of the whole man is possible. If his entire evil nature were at once taken away, there would be very little of him left. Besides, the heavenly nature is to be acquired in freedom. The building which is to last for ever, can only be slowly erected. By little and little must the evils of the soul be discovered to man, and rejected by him, in the trials and temptations which Divine Mercy will suffer him to endure only as he becomes capable of conquering in them. Adored be the tender care of our Heavenly Father and Saviour who finds us leprous in sin, but leads us to the heavenly waters to wash again and again, until we come out with our flesh as a little child. "He finds us in a desert land, in a waste, howling wilderness; he leads us about, he instructs us, he keeps us as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone does lead us, and no strange god is with us."—Deut. xxxii. 10—12. If we wish to have a vivid idea of the slow change which takes place in the affections of man, let us only reflect what effort and perseverance it requires to conquer a single bad habit. How difficult it is to bring ourselves even to the determination to strive against it. How painful to resist the inclination to fall back upon it again, after it has, to all appearance, been mastered.

And if this be the case with insignificant habits, how much more must it be with the change of the very principles and foundations of the character? Yet this is what regeneration has to

effect. The lover of impure pleasure must become pure in heart. The worldly man must be brought to love the treasures which make the soul rich before God, rather than the fleeting things of earth: the selfish man must deny himself, and substitute for self-will the pure government of justice, truth, and love: the vain man must abase himself, and exalt the love of right: the slothful man must renounce his interior disinclination to disturb himself for the good of others, and receive from heaven an ardent and untiring love of usefulness. To all men the Lord Jesus says, "Ye must be born again." Who is sufficient for these things? Struggles innumerable must take place before the battle of life is over.

"Nor will I dream the heart and life
Are in a moment clean:
For long and painful is the strife
Which must be felt within."

Were we left to ourselves, we might well turn back in despair, and die. But happily, what is impossible to man, is possible with God. He can give us a new nature: He can give us the victory again and again: He can and will protect us. He intended each one of us for heaven, and He will be with us in all our conflicts with our sins and failings, until we have acquired that inward heaven, without which we never could be happy anywhere (Luke xvii. 21). "Fear not," His divine promise runs, "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."—Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

When, then, our internal enemies, the plagues of our own hearts, appear to us, and dispositions which we supposed were for ever done with, are met again and again, let us not quail nor be dissipated. With divine help, we shall overcome them; and triumph until the last enemy is overthrown. But the Lord saves us by His Word. This is the lesson intended by the use of the silver trumpets which we are now considering: "If ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." "We wrestle not," saith the apostle, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and

having done all, to stand."—Eph. vi. 12, 13. When, then, my beloved hearers, selfishness riseth up in your land to oppress you, when like a serpent it crosses your path, and would overcome your devotion to heavenly principles; when you have laboured against it, wrestled with it, and feel the struggle to be a hard one, go to the Divine Word, and hear its holy sound. Let its voice of love and mercy be heard in your spirit like the silvery tones of heavenly trumpets, and by its truth and power you will be saved. O how like the tones of a heavenly trumpet are those precious words of the psalmist, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life I will satisfy him, and grant him my salvation."—Ps. xci. 13—16.

So, whatever be the evil by which we are assailed, and their name is legion for they are many, we must go to the Word; let its voice be heard; like heavenly music, it will impart courage, light, perseverance, patience, and indomitable determination to conquer every opposing lust, inclination, temper, principle, habit, fancy and pursuit, which we perceive to be contrary to the spirit of religion and of heaven. O that we may ever remember this blessed truth! Go to the Word for encouragement and strength. Blow the silver trumpet, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. The Word, read and pondered in the spirit of prayer, is the divine safeguard for the struggling Christian. "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them and delivered them from their destructions."—Ps. cvii. 19, 20.

The Word assures us of the presence of the Lord, and of His angels. It is as the sound of a host of friends approaching like the heralds of heaven, announcing the Saviour. And if in prayerful devotion we listen to its teachings, the tempters of the soul must fly from its sphere and presence.

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw.
Infernals tremble when they see
The contrite heart, and bended knee."

Such, then, is the encouraging divine instruction conveyed in the spiritual import of this use of the silver trumpets. Let us never forget it. We shall have our conflicts and trials. We have to labour, and bear the burden and heat of the day. In our

own strength, we can neither grow in goodness, nor conquer our evils. But O how delightful it is to think there is a refuge which will strengthen us, and be perfected in our weakness. We have a charm which is sufficient infallibly to give us the victory, —the Word of our God, which abideth for ever. The silver trumpets are there; let us blow them, and we shall assuredly be saved from our enemies.

The last use of the trumpets was, that they should be blown on the days of solemn rejoicing. "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God."

It is sometimes a serious omission in the life of a Christian, when he forgets to sanctify, by the voice of religion, his joys as well as his sorrows. Our Lord said, "I come not to take away your joy from you, but that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." All innocent joys have their origin in heaven; but especially such as spring up within us, when we have conquered an evil, been faithful in a duty, and tasted the "luxury of doing good." On our days of gladness we should see that all our feelings are such as are under the influence of the Holy Word. Were it not for sin, all our days, like those of heaven, would be days of gladness. The purification of our joys, then, is one of the great works of our regeneration. Let us blow with the silver trumpets on our days of gladness, and on our solemn days. There are states, which recur from time to time, of peculiar solemnity, when conscience is more than usually earnest with us; states of self-examination, states of solemn thought, states of recollection of mercies and blessings formerly received, states of self-dedication to high and holy objects; these are our solemn days. The Israelites had three most solemn feasts: the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of first fruits, and the feast of ingathering. And these are the correspondencies of three solemn periods in our regenerate life. The period when we resolved to quit a life of evil, and entered upon our passover, or feast of unleavened bread; when we commenced the reception of the bread of heaven, though as yet to us tasteless, like unleavened bread; then comes the period when faith enables us, under its influence, to bring forth the first-fruits of a harvest of virtues and graces to be repeated for ever; and lastly, the feast of spiritual ingathering comes on, that matured state of the soul when charity rules in the heart, and perfect love casteth out fear.

It has been first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, as our Lord described. And when we can feel gratefully assured that such states have been secured in us, these are occasions for solemn rejoicings. These, too, should ever be in harmony with the sweet spirit of the Word of the Lord. Blow with the silver trumpets over the solemn days. There are minor solemnities connected with the varied events of life which induce in thoughtful minds solemn states: the births, the marriages, and the deaths of those we love, the serious circumstances of our families, and our country; all these make solemn days; let the spirit which rules over them be the spirit of love to the Lord, and charity to man. Blow the silver trumpets over the solemn days.

There is mention made also of the beginning of the months, and as there is a perfect correspondence between outward nature, and man's spiritual and interior existence, there is a correspondence in this respect also. The months are the times which depend upon the moon; and the moon is the symbol of faith in the soul. As faith has its variations in the soul, sometimes being bright and luminous, at others dim and obscure, its changes are represented by those of the moon. The beginning of a month is therefore the commencement of a new state of faith in the soul, when after being in obscurity, we enter into clear and holy light, on things divine. The tree of life is said to bear twelve manner of fruits,—one for every month; implying that in every state of mind, and in every change of circumstances in our Christian life, we may receive, from the Lord within, the power of bringing forth the appropriate works of piety and justice.

At the beginning of our mental changes, in the attainment of new views on subjects of faith, we should observe that they are in harmony with the essential principles of the spirit of the Word; of love to the Lord, and charity to man. Blow the silver trumpets in the beginning of the months.

And, lastly, over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings.

Our offerings at this day are all spiritual. Yet are we as truly called upon to make them as were the Jews. To us, as to them it is said, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar: it shall never go out."—Lev. vi. 13. We should be prepared to worship the Lord at all times, in acts of praise, and in acts of usefulness. We worship the Lord in praise and prayer, in public and private devotion. And this, when it is done from love and interior devotion, is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. But we can worship the Lord also in act;

indeed, in everything we do. This latter worship is the very end, for which the former was instituted—to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. It is beautiful to assemble together to pray for the supply of our necessities, especially our spiritual ones, to praise for blessings already enjoyed, to hear the divine counsel unfolded, and to devote ourselves afresh to carry out the sacred laws of heavenly order. When love glows in the heart on such occasions, a burnt-offering is made of a purer kind than that which arose from the altars of Aaron. But still more beautiful is the sacrifice of the whole life, from love, so that every purpose is pursued, and every duty performed with regard to justice and judgment, which are the Divine will. When we seek for affection, for light, and strength, to do this in all things, we follow the Lord's admonition, "to pray always and never faint." Each sacrifice involved three things—the devotion to the Lord of what is good in us, the rejection of what is impure, and the blending together of goodness and truth in our intentions and thoughts, represented by the sprinkling or pouring the blood upon the altar. O may we be sanctified by the truth to realize these sacrificial objects. Our divine head and example, the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified Himself, and became a whole burnt-offering; perfected, by complete dedication to the Father within, He is the Passover who was sacrificed for us. Let us follow Him in self-dedication. Worship in prayer, and worship in work: these are both essential in the Christian character. Let ours be a series of such sacrifices, both burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. The burnt-offerings were fixed sacrifices for certain defined objects: the peace-offerings were voluntary sacrifices. Life consists of fixed duties, and free-will efforts. Let both be performed in the spirit of devoted self-dedication, under the divine spirit of the Holy Word. The silver trumpet must sound over our burnt-offerings and our sacrifices of peace-offerings, that they may be to us a memorial before the Lord our God. Our worship and our works are, indeed, for a memorial to eternity, when they build us up for heaven. It is a consideration we sometimes overlook, that all our deeds have an inner, as well as an outer side. The motives and principles in which they originate, have as decided an effect upon the inner man as the acts themselves have upon the outer world; and even it may be a greater effect. Works are effected in the outer world, and these will endure for a time, perhaps for a long time, but at length they will perish; works are accomplished within, which will last for ever. The love which aims at the happiness of those around us, builds up within us holy

hopes and holy feelings. The faith which reposes upon the Lord, and His Word, builds up bright views, noble expectations, plans, and purposes, and convictions, bringing the whole mind into the order and harmony of heaven. The resolute resistances we make to evil within and without us; the objects of charity and justice we labour to effect, all form the soul, to be a memorial before the Lord our God. No soul can be happy in the eternal world, but one which has become in this world accustomed to the glorious principles of the other. A spirit accustomed to respire with delight in the atmosphere of impure thoughts which surrounds the impious and polluted, could not breathe in the air of heaven. A heart hot with revenge, or with lust, would cringe and writhe beneath the glow of heavenly love, like a tormented serpent. An intellect accustomed to the darkness and deceit of folly and falsehood, would fly like a terrified owl from the light of heaven. The whole organized mass of selfishness and sin, which composes the spirit of a hardened bad man, is in bitterest contrariety with the order of the inner world. Every law of heaven smites him. Were he forced into heaven, he would be unutterably agonized at every pore. Hence the indispensable necessity for regeneration announced by our Divine Saviour, "Ye must be born again." The kingdom of God is within you. There is no peace, there can be none for the wicked. But when the soul by worship, by self-sacrifice, by self-dedication to all that is pure, peaceable, elevating, wise, noble and virtuous, builds up in itself angelic states, these are works which will be taken with it beyond the grave. These are a memorial imperishable before the Lord. This memorial is written upon the heart, written upon the mind, written upon all its powers, and written upon the life. Its characters are everlasting, as the soul itself. It is a memorial before Him to whom all hearts are known; before the Lord our God.

In conclusion, the adorable Giver of the ordinances before us reminds us that He is Divine Love itself, and Divine Wisdom itself, in the impressive sentence, "I am the Lord your God." The LORD, or Jehovah, is expressive of the very BEING, of the Eternal, and God is Love. The term God, which in the Hebrew is expressive of power, imports the divine Truth without which love, even Infinite Love, cannot effect its objects. By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made. Men are sanctified by the truth. Truth is the spiritual power by which love acts, illuminates, guards, and saves. When then we can have directions for our guidance, endorsed with the declaration, "I am the Lord your

God," let us gratefully accept the counsels which have issued from the sources of all goodness and intelligence, the Divine Love and Wisdom of the Eternal Himself.

In conclusion, let us be grateful for the provision, by our adorable Lord, of the interior truths of His Word, the silver trumpets of heaven. Let us seek to find them by reading, by thought and meditation, until we have individually realized the promise of our Heavenly Father and Saviour, "For iron I will bring silver." When we have acquired the clear perception that all truth hangs upon the two grand laws of love to God, and love to man, then let their silvery voice be heard over all the circumstances of our lives. Let them be heard calling us from sabbath to sabbath to the public worship of the Lord Jesus Christ,—the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let them be heard directing our attention to Him in our morning and evening devotions. When we have attained light and strength in prayer, they ever call us to march on, to progress. Let us go forward with a glowing, firm, and fervent will, and then strengthen and confirm our progress by the light of a full and active intellect. Let the east go first, and the south afterwards. When enemies appear in our land, the foes which have been lurking in heart and mind, the silver trumpets make their sound heard, calling us to faithful, but to loving and patient resistance. Let us be fearless, but gentle; firm, but kind. No spirit of fretfulness, impatience, or despair should be heard within us, but the spirit of the Divine Truth,—the sound of the silver trumpets. And when our days of struggle have been followed by days of gladness, let our joys be as sacredly in harmony with heavenly wisdom, as our struggles have been. In all our solemn days, let the trumpets sound. Let us, in fact, place our whole lives under the government of the hallowed directions of the two universal truths of heaven, so that at home and abroad, in the closet, and in public; in heart, and in act, in thought and word, in devotion and in practice, the silvery notes of heavenly wisdom may sound; and at length when the last trumpet which calls us from earth may be heard, its hallowed import will be no words of terror or dread, but those divine expressions heard by the beloved John, and we can say like him, I heard a voice as of a trumpet talking unto me, saying, "Come up hither."

"No ill in death my soul shall fear,
For still my Shepherd will be near;
His peaceful comforts will be given,
Whilst angels bear me up to heaven."

SERMON IX.

THE RIBBAND OF BLUE.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them."—Numb. xv. 38, 39.

It is extremely to be regretted that so many who bear the name of Christian have the most inadequate view of religion. To many it is but a name. They call themselves by the name of this or that great body, but ask them what they think of the principles which the name implies, and you find the name, and little besides. Others, again, seem to think that religion is an excellent debating-ground, a favourite battle-field. They will incessantly wrangle and dispute about its everlasting principles, but meditate little upon them, and practise them less. These are like the left-handed men of Benjamin among the Israelites of old, who "could sling stones at a hair-breadth and not miss." They are not of much use except in war. Far more eloquently and convincingly does he speak for his religion, whose life pleads for it; who shews that he derives from it virtue and defence, consolation and strength, light and blessing; and therefore recommending it in deed, can also recommend it in word. "Ye are our epistles," said the apostle, "seen and read of all men."

Perhaps we cannot give a more comprehensive definition of religion, than to say it is the supply to the soul of all its spiritual wants. It is the soul's home, its food, and its clothing; and to this latter feature, its being clothing for the soul, we now entreat your attention. "Blessed," it is written, "is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."—Rev. xvi. 15.

That garments, even in the Jewish law, are the corresponding symbols of those principles which clothe the soul, may be inferred from the laws which we frequently find in relation to them. Unless there was a spiritual sense in them, surely it

would not have been worthy of the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity to give directions in relation to what kind of clothes men should wear. There is the direction not to wear a garment of woollen and linen together; again, for a woman not to wear the garment of a man; again, for a man's garment not to be kept in pledge after the sun has gone down; and now the law before us, that a fringe should be made to the garment, and on the fringe a ribband of blue. Surely it cannot concern the Infinite Ruler of all worlds what kind of trimming His people have to their dress, or colour of ribband they have thereon.

The soul and its concerns are surely the only appropriate objects of a Revelation from the Eternal Father of immortal beings. To teach us how to give the spirit a dress, so that it may be beautiful in the sight of angels, is worthy of Him who clothes Himself with light as with a garment (Ps. civ. 2). "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear."—Rev. iii. 18.

The chief use of clothing is defence against the chills and variations of the weather: two subordinate uses are for the promotion of beauty, and for distinction of office.

We can be at no loss to perceive that there are mental uses corresponding to the above which require for the soul spiritual clothing. The soul has its summer and its winter, and all the varieties of a mental year. There are seasons of hopefulness and brilliancy in which we have all the elasticity and promise of spring; there are states of peaceful warmth, of continued serene happiness; "the soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy" which bespeak the spirit's summer: but there are likewise periods of decreasing warmth, of incipient depressions, and coolnesses to what has formerly yielded the highest pleasure; until at length we arrive at states of painful chill, and even of intensest cold, the joylessness, the hopelessness, and the sadness, which are the attendants of the winter of the soul.

This depressed condition of the spirits is portrayed with graphic truthfulness by one who said—

" My years are in the yellow leaf,
And all the life of life is gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone."

And in a sweeter spirit of piety by another poet,—

" O for a closer walk with God,
A sweet and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road,
Which leads me to the Lamb.

“ Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus, and His Word?

“ What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still;
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.”

In this wintry state, storms of distressing fears and darkening doubts will rush upon the soul. Strong delusions, that we may believe a lie, will, like fierce tempests, howl about us. Cold, harassing, cheerless frames of mind, dispiriting anxieties, filling us with discomfort and dread; bitter self-accusations urged upon us, perhaps, by “spiritual wickednesses in high places,” like pitiless hail-storms which come upon us again and again, all teach us how real it is that the soul has its winter as well as its summer. In relation to these spiritual seasons it is written, “And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.”—Zech. xiv. 8.

Thrice happy are they who remember, the living waters of the Divine Word will be a comfort and a blessing in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, in summer and in winter; but they should also bear in mind, that to be a protection in all seasons, the Divine Mercy has provided us with spiritual clothing.

The DOCTRINES of religion when intelligently adopted, and adapted to our particular states, serve this important purpose. And when those doctrines are, as they ought to be, full, comprehensive, and complete, applying themselves to all the departments of human affection, thought and life, they make a complete dress. Hence it is said in Isaiah, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”—lxi. 10.

The doctrines which teach the true character of the Lord, His infinite and unchanging Love, His unerring and all-comprehensive Wisdom, His omnipotent and ever-orderly Power, these form the clothing for the head. The doctrines which teach and impel us to our duty to our neighbour, form the clothing to the breast: while those which teach that our religion should be operative, and descend to inspire and sanctify every word and every deed of life: these are the remainder of the spirit's dress, even to the “shoes upon the feet.”

With this view of the spiritual dress of the Christian, we shall see the fullest significance in many interesting portions of the sacred Scriptures. When the prodigal son returned, we are informed, "The father said unto his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet,"—Luke xv. 22, where it is manifest that the clothing of a newly-penitent spirit with those sacred truths which will form its best robe, that assurance of everlasting love which conjoins it to its Lord as a golden marriage ring, and those true principles of virtuous practice which are the only bases of real religion, are the shoes upon the feet.

A most important lesson is afforded to us by the Divine Word in Matthew. It is said of those who came in to partake of the wedding feast of the King of Heaven, "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—xxii. 11—13. No one can imagine that there was any sin in a particular earthly dress not being had by those who enter the Lord's kingdom. But in a spiritual point of view, nothing can exceed the value of the intimation it contains. The kingdom of heaven, in fact everything heavenly, is the result of a marriage. Wisdom sweetly blends with love to form the heavenly state. It is not a kingdom of faith alone, but of faith united to charity. No cold knowledge is tolerated there, but must be conjoined with affection for what is known. All is union in an angelic mind. All heaven is united to its Divine Head the Lord Jesus Christ. The marriage order reigns complete, and joy is the result. "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."—Isa. lxii. 4.

Not to have on a wedding garment then, is not to have a doctrine which unfolds this glorious union of truth and love in religion, and in heaven. It is to be practically among those who say, and do not. It is to make a parade of our piety and profession it may be, but to neglect that, without which piety is nothing, faith is nothing, doctrine is nothing, name is nothing; that pure and holy love, which worketh, which hopeth, which believeth, which beareth all things; which in sight of all the Christian virtues is deserving of the apostolic declaration. "And

now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.”—1 Corinthians xiii. 13. When we have taken for our religion only that which relates to belief, and not that which concerns love and conduct, the heart unchecked and unchanged will be the home of selfishness and impurity ; and the time will come, either in this world or in the next, when there will issue from the unregenerate heart those virulent evils, which will paralyse every power of good, will bind the hand and foot and plunge the spirit into the darkest abysses of folly.

With these views of doctrines forming the clothing of the soul, we see at once the importance of those allusions to garments which are so frequently met with in the Old as well as the New Testament. When the prophet predicts the advent of the Lord into the world, and thus opening to mankind the glorious doctrines of Christianity, instead of the miserable shreds of Jewish tradition, he says, “Awake, awake ; put on thy strength of Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city : for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.”—Is. lii. 1. Again, in that well known prophecy which begins “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted ;” the prophet continues to unfold the gracious purpose of Jehovah in the flesh ; “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.”—Is. lxi. 3. Here the doctrine of the love of God manifest in the flesh, is manifestly and righteously called “a garment of praise.” What could more powerfully induce the soul to clothe itself with praise than the perception that our Saviour is our Heavenly Father, that the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity had for our sakes condescended to appear in the extreme of His vast domains, the skin of the universe as it were, and by assuming and maintaining a connexion with the outer universe, He became First and Last in Himself, and from Himself fills, sustains, and succours all.

When the Lord Jesus said, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments ; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment,” He is evidently describing the condition of those who have not stained their profession of the Christian doctrine with impurity of life ; they had not defiled their garments now, and in eternity their

views would be still purer, they should walk with Him in white. Doctrines in harmony with purest truth, are white raiment wherewith we may be clothed.

The New Dispensation of religion which in the fulness of time would be introduced from heaven among men, is represented as coming down "as a bride adorned for her husband." And, by this language, we are assured, no doubt, not only that this church would regard the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Lamb, as the only object of her supreme love, her husband, but that her doctrines would be beyond all precedent, beautiful. She would be adorned for her husband. Such a glorious system would she have of celestial truth,—such disclosures of heavenly order,—such discoveries of the divine laws as existent in the soul; in the regenerate life; in the heavenly world; in the spiritual sense of the Holy Word: in fact, on all subjects of Divine Wisdom, that to the truly devout and thoughtful spirit, she would truly be "adorned as a bride for her husband."

There is an interesting intimation of the character of true heavenly clothing in Psalm xlv., "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework (verses 13, 14), where the character of true celestial doctrine is declared to be the gold of love, wrought into system,—love wrought out. The king's daughter, all such as, animated by pure affections for truth derived from the King of kings, are desirous of graces of the heart and mind, which are worth more than the wealth of kingdoms. They become glorious within, and all their views of doctrine are love as it were speaking, and declaring its true nature. With them, God is love, heaven is love, love is the fulfilling of the law, love keeps the commandments, the Word truly understood, is the revelation of love. Their whole doctrine, like the street of the holy city, is of pure gold, formed by the spiritual embroidery of an intellect which spiritually discerns the harmonious relations of everlasting things. The Word supplies the raw material, line upon line, and precept upon precept. The rational powers weave them into a beautiful system, and prepares them to be worn. And when the judgment, under the impulse of a humble determination to live for heaven, adapts these doctrines to its own especial states and requirements, the Christian is equipped in the garments of salvation. "He is glorious within, and his clothing is of wrought gold."

And, here, we would strongly guard against one of the most dangerous delusions which has crept into nominal Christianity; the idea that we are saved by the infinite purity of Christ's

righteousness being imparted to us, and not by actual, practical righteousness. It is true, our righteousness is derived from the Lord, "their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17. But no righteousness will be imputed to us, which has not been imparted to us. His spirit will be imputed to us, so far as we receive it, but no farther. God, is a God of truth, and never imputes to any one, what he does not possess. "He that doeth righteousness, is righteous."—1 John iii. 7. The merit of divine righteousness in salvation, is as incommunicable as the merit of creation. The robe of the Saviour's perfections, has a name on it, which no man knows but He Himself (Rev. xix. 16). And, yet, numbers neglect to acquire the white robe, or the wrought gold, of imparted truth and love, under the vain idea that the personal perfections of our Lord, will be imputed to them. Our food is from Him, but if instead of eating that which He now provides, we were to attempt to live by imputing that which He ate in the days of His flesh, we should die of starvation. So, if instead of receiving, and applying to ourselves the living streams of His righteousness by earnest prayer and earnest practice, we expect His merits to be imputed to us, as righteousness, so that although we are really wicked, we shall be accounted good; although really polluted, we shall be accounted clean; we shall be naked and helpless, in the day when He makes up his jewels. No doubt, the Lord lived on earth for our sakes, suffered for our sakes, died for our sakes, rose again for our sakes, made His Humanity righteousness embodied, for our sakes. "For their sakes, I sanctify myself," He said, "that they may be sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19. All was done for us to enable us to be sanctified, but not to be put down to our account. When our account is made up, we shall find the rule to be, "They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation."—John v. 29. He comes quickly to give to every man as *his work* shall be (Rev. xxii. 12). Blessed shall we be, if we watch and keep our garments, made white by His truth, and thus are ready to follow our Divine Leader in the realms of peace, adoring in humble love, those infinite perfections which make His face to shine like the sun, and His raiment white as the light (Matt. xvii. 2). We are, then, to speak to the Israelites, who are typified by those of our text, the spiritual Israelites who are as our Lord said, Israelites indeed, and say first that they clothe themselves with genuine doctrines of divine truth, with the garments of salvation, and that they especially make them fringes in the borders of their garments. After, we have

meditated upon the doctrines of religion, and seen their fitness to our own states of mind and heart, thus clothed ourselves in them; the next part of our duty is to bring them into life. This is a most important point. Many there are, who put on religion as a dress for the head, and even also for the breast, but do not bring it down to the feet. But we are to make a border for our garments, and the border must be a fringe. The distinctive feature of a fringe is, that the material of which it is composed is divided into small portions, firmly united at the upper part, but hanging with separate forms of beauty at the lower. The idea suggested by this is, that religion must be employed in all the small affairs of daily life, as well as on great occasions, the lowest part of our spiritual dress must be a fringe. Our Lord declared the same important truth when He said, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."—Luke xvi. 10.

This practical admonition is of the very highest consequence. One of the most serious errors of life is that our religion is only to be brought out on grand occasions, as some think, or on Sundays, as others practically shew, they suppose. The only way in which we make the truths of religion really ours, is to infuse their spirit and tone into all our little acts in our daily conduct. Life is made up of little things. One circumstance follows another, one act comes after another, each one small of itself, but the whole forming the tissue of our entire outward existence. Our whole journey is made step by step. There are no great swoops made. By little and little, we drive out our evils; and by little and little, we introduce the principles of wisdom and goodness into the whole texture of our conduct. By this, we must not be misunderstood to mean, that we are not to subject the whole man to the government of heavenly laws, but only that we are to do it in each circumstance as it comes to hand, and to do it now, not to wait for great occasions. Let the border of your garment be a fringe.

Many, very many, have no objection to the head or the breast being in the church, but the feet they imagine may be quite otherwise engaged. But the true disciple of our Saviour adopts the language of the Psalmist, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."—Ps. cxxii. 2. He is particularly watchful over his feet, or his daily practice. If in his moments of weakness he wavers, he looks up to the Saviour, the Source of strength, and prays, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not."—Ps. xvii. 5. Often, will he have to confess,

"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped."—Ps. lxxiii. 2. Yet will he find invisible hands have borne him up, for his ever-watchful Father has given his angels charge concerning him, lest he dash his feet against a stone (Ps. xci. 11, 12). And again, and again will he find occasion gratefully to exclaim, "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."—Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9. If, like Peter, at first, he thinks it quite beneath his Master's dignity to purify the lower concerns of life, and declares, Thou shalt never wash my feet; when he is better informed, and hears the Saviour's words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me," he, with an entire spirit of self-devotion exclaims, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head."—John xiii. 9.

This religion of daily life is the grand necessity of the world. Without that, our sabbath worship is but an organized hypocrisy. We should pray, that we may be able to practise, not to substitute prayer for practice. Beautiful as is the devout worship of the sanctuary, sweet as is devotional piety, and soul-exalting as are hymns of gratitude; they are only the unsubstantial beauty of a dream, unless they are brought down to give direction, purity, and strength to daily life. Let there then be a fringe for the borders of your garments, throughout all your generations.

It is for want of this descent of religion into daily life, that its blessings are often very faintly felt. The sweetness of the knowledge of the Lord is only experienced when religion has become a living hourly series of virtues with us. It is said of the disciples who were going to Emmaus, though the Lord walked with them, and they felt the holy glow of his presence when he talked with them on the way, He only became known to them in "the breaking of the bread." It is so with His disciples in all ages. So long as the "bread of life" is received in a mass, and remains thus, the blessing of conjunction with the Divine Being is unknown. He is with them, but as a stranger. But let them break the bread; let them at home and abroad, in the counting house and on change, in the workshop and at market, in their pleasures and in all their family duties break the bread of heaven, and apply it to every work and word, and they will then know the Lord. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning, and He shall come unto us as the rain; as the latter and former rain upon the earth.

O then let our religion not be like a Sunday dress, put on only for parade on state occasions, and put off when the occasion

has passed by, but like a simple daily robe whose usefulness is seen of all, and whose fringe goes all round the hem of our garment, so that it extends over the whole circle of our outward life.

We are, however, not only commanded to have a fringe to our garments, but to have upon the fringe a ribband of blue. And this leads us to consider the correspondence of colours. Natural colours, we know originate in natural light. They are the separation of the beauties which are bound up in the sun-beam, and their reflection to the human eye. There is a trinity of fundamental colours, red, blue, and yellow. From the blending of these in varied proportions all others are made. Blue and yellow form green.

Bearing in mind that the Lord is the Sun of the eternal world, and that essential truth shines as a spiritual light from Him, the three essential colours into which light divides itself, will represent the three essential features of divine truth, in its application to man. There are truths of love, which apply to our affections, truths of faith which apply to thoughts, and truths of life. Red, the colour of fire, is the symbol of the truths of love, the fire of the soul. Blue, the colour of the azure depths of the sky, is symbolic of the deep things of the spirit of God, on which faith delights to gaze. Yellow, is the hue of truth which applies to outward life, and in combination with blue it makes green, which corresponds to truth in the letter of the Word, made simple to the common eye of mankind.

Blue gives a sense of clearness and depth, in which it surpasses all other hues. When we gaze into the blue depths of the sky, far above the changes of the clouds, their tranquil grandeur, arching in peaceful majesty far over the turmoils of the world, strikingly images those depths of heavenly wisdom from which the good man draws strength and peace.

"Though round his breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on his head."

Blue, then is the colour which represents the spirit of the Holy Word, the depths of heavenly wisdom.

There is, however, cold blue, as it has more of white in it, and warm blue, as it derives a certain hue from red. There has also been some difficulty in determining the exact shade meant by Techeleth, the Hebrew name for this colour. But from a full consideration of the subject we are satisfied it was the name for blues tinged with red, from violet to purple. And this very strikingly brings out the divine lesson by correspondence. While the blue indicates that in our demeanour in life we should

be correct, in harmony with the spirit of truth, the red hue indicates that all our truth ought to be softened, and warmed, by love. "Speak the truth in love," said the apostle, and to remind them of this duty, God commanded the ribband of warm blue to be worn upon the fringe of their garments, by the sons of Israel.

Truth without love is cold, hard and un pitying, and therefore repulsive. Truth with anger is scalding hot, and like medicine, impossible to be taken, useless or injurious; but truth coming from a loving heart, firm, but gentle, and sweet like the warm sunbeam, is welcome to all.

The loving blue of the eye, which reveals the sweet impulses of a soft and gentle heart, is like the colour of the ribband, before us, it speaks of the purity and the warmth of the spirit within. Let there, then, be upon all your demeanour this colour of heavenly love.

Seen in the view we have now arrived at, this commandment increases in practical importance, the more we contemplate it. Perhaps the neglect of it is the cause of more failures in the delivery of well-meant advice, than any other circumstance. We proceed to correct with the rough, stern hand of truth alone, and we encounter resistance. We are sure we are right, and we proceed to reproach and invective. Quarrels ensue, instead of amendment. We brood over our failure, and wonder at the perversity of mankind, not reflecting that we have not put on the fringe upon our garment, the ribband of heavenly blue.

"O be kind to each other,
The night's coming on;
When friend and when brother,
Perchance may be gone."

Nothing can be farther from the spirit of heaven, than a stern, harsh, vindictive utterance of truth. We should ever remember that we can ourselves only be assisted by one who manifests to us a spirit of kindness in his counsel. To an assailant we close up. We cannot bear our faults to be exposed by one who does it in a spirit of exultation and insolence. But we love the friendly hand which has a brother's touch. We delight to see the dress not starched with prudery, but having upon all its fringe, the ribband of heaven's own blue.

With this blessed tone, how often would homes be happy which are frequently torn with dissension. A brother will be gentle from courtesy to others, but is sulky or sharp to his own. A sister, from politeness, will be brilliant and fascinating to visitors, but often fails to wear the blue ribband to those of her own fireside. Oh, if the Christian ministry has one object

which more than another should be its constant aim, it should be to contribute to the happiness of home, that sacred centre of all that is elevating, strengthening, purifying, and ennobling among men. And nothing will be a truer source of all these blessings than to speak to brothers and sisters, and say, in all your intercourse with each other let the spirit of religion be visible. In each small act of daily intercourse with each other, let there be a fringe from your religion within, and on the fringe let the truth of intelligence be blended with the kindness of real love. You were created to learn to be fellow angels in the house. You were placed to walk together on your path to heaven, to give an assisting hand when a weak one stumbles, to exhort the slothful, to cheer the weary, to warn against danger's paths and dangerous foes, to encourage the struggling, to rejoice together when you gain a glorious prospect, to animate each other to your daily progress, and often to taste by anticipation the triumph you will have when all the dangers of life are gone by, and heaven is for ever your home. Remember the charge of Joseph to his brethren, "See that ye fall not out by the way." In your acts and your words, let there be seen upon all your fringes, the ribband of heavenly blue.

We come, now, to a still dearer connexion, which would often be more blest if the spirit of this divine command were more faithfully carried out.

In that most sacred of all human ties, the marriage union, it is of the highest importance that the blue ribband should appear in all the demeanour of husband and wife. Yet, sometimes the domestic hearth is less tender and happy than it might be, for want of the gentle amenities of truth spoken in love. When that mysterious sympathy which attracts congenial souls to each other, first induces ardent thoughts in the young lovers, the earnestness of affection presents to both only all that is amiable and agreeable. Each finds a magnifier of the excellences of the other, and no imperfection can be seen. And, when the hopes of both are crowned by possession, a long vista of happiness is beheld, thronged with an endless succession of joys and blessings. Yet both parties have failings. The perfection fancy has painted, will in many respects, be found to be overdrawn. The bloom of outward beauty will wear off. Possession will deprive many attractions of the exaggerated value for which they were chiefly indebted to passion. Both are probably young, both imperfect, both are human. Hence, there come discoveries of faults and shortcomings which belong to us all, but which had been before unseen. And now is the opportunity

for the manifestation of real love, in having patience with the loved one. If they have loved wisely, the virtues of each other, and that mutual adaptation of feeling, taste, and character which has drawn their souls to desire a union impossible with any one else, have been the chief attractions; and for their sakes, they can well afford to bear with some defects. Instead of being astonished to find that the mere mortals we have married have some of the failings of our fallen race, we should take kindly the opportunities of shewing, that ours has not been the selfish passion which desires only its own gratification, but rather the holy affection that, forgetful of self, seeks chiefly the happiness of those we love. To assist, and be assisted, to form angelic characters in each other, these are the chief objects for which marriage has been instituted. And to accomplish these ends, we must have a faithful, but a friendly eye for the imperfections of each other. We should scarcely notice the unpleasant effect of faults in relation to our personal gratification, but be quicksighted to perceive the injury they inflict upon the doer. "Who is so blind as He that is perfect," says the prophet, in reference to that Divine Mercy which sees not our sins so far as they are directed against Him, and condemns them, only as they are fountains of misery to ourselves.

Our Lord washed His disciples' feet, and said, "As I have washed your feet, so must ye wash one another's feet." And if to assist each other, to remove imperfections from our conduct, which is spiritually washing one another's feet, is a duty we owe to our ordinary Christian friends, how much more is it a duty to assist in removing the spots which soil the characters of those we have undertaken to love and to cherish. Yet what tender care this duty needs. The true wife, or husband, cannot bear to think that the deeply-prized love of the other is being lost. Noticing a fault rudely, betrays the appearance of dislike, and wounds deeply. Sometimes, self-love will creep in between married partners, and the struggle for power will take the appearance of opposition to faults. Then lacerated feelings are poured forth in bitter expressions. Then, quarrels arise, long animosities are inaugurated, which take from home its sweetness, banish all those tender endearments, those happy confidences, those heartfelt reliances on each other, those fireside pleasures which constitute earth's nearest likeness to heaven. Then oppositions are engendered, recriminations are heard, hateful everywhere, but intolerable from those we love. Distrusts, fears, and anxieties intrude, where only confidence should reign, and home becomes the saddest abode of misery. All this has happened, will happen,

if we are not careful, in our married life especially, to speak the truth in love. There, above all, the blue ribband should be seen upon our garments. Sweetness in our goodness, and tenderness in our truth, should be the incessant law of married partners to each other. A fearfulness of injuring the feelings of the other. A friendly, kindly touch, when any mental sore requires attention. A determination to do nothing, which does not manifest a constant affection. A deference to each other's wishes. A manifest active effort to promote the other's happiness. These are the dispositions which can alone preserve and complete that choicest of all Divine Blessing—genuine conjugal love.

When misunderstanding has been sustained, and bruised, affections manifest how deeply they are hurt, their pain should not be treated lightly. He would be thought cruel who trampled on the inflamed foot of another, yet the anguished heart is sometimes tortured with stinging words of bitterest taunt and reproach, under the delusion that it is necessary to blame where fault has been committed. The first necessity is to bring ourselves into a state of real kindness and affection. Then ascertain if the supposed fault be as real as it appeared. If so, to ask from Him who views us all from kindness, for wisdom, first pure, then peaceable, to speak the truth in love. While our ribband is blue, to take care that it is soft and warm. How desirable this is in our intercourse with others! In our intercourse with those who are to form with us the happiness of heart and home, it is indispensable.

And, yet it is not at all uncommon for unwise married partners so far to neglect this divine commandment, as to be all smiles to others, and to reserve their coldness for those whom they should most fondly cherish. The husband open, smiling, and sedulously polite to any other lady, will be reserved, negligent, uncourteous, and unkind to the heart which should be to him above all price. The wife, all-radiant, with smiles to others, attentive to their minutest wishes or comforts, will not trouble herself to retain, or regain the affections of that one, on whom all her real happiness depends. The gentle conciliating word, for which her husband's heart, beneath a firm exterior is longing, she will not speak. The one, she won by gentleness, and grace, and all the feminine virtues, she will not preserve by growing in those virtues, but rudely repels. And the heart whose faintest throb she once valued beyond all earthly riches, she rudely throws away.

O married partners, tenants of the same home, who should be all in all to each other, for time and for eternity, never neg-

lect in your sentiments, your spirit, your acts, and your words to each other, to let there be visible on all the manifestations of character with which your life's dress is fringed, the truth and the love of celestial blue. O wife, matron, mother, remember your strength is in tenderness. Never shock the feelings of your husband by harsh, bitter, unwomanly exasperations. Your peculiar province is at home; let it be ever preserved sacred to domestic peace, by a meek and quiet spirit. So will you be your husband's dearest trust, and chief consoler; your children's constant refuge; and when you have passed beyond the shades of time, the star of fond remembrance that shines high above the cares of earth, and lures them still to heaven.

O husband, O father, on whom the wife's fond heart desires to lean, let no harsh expression drive her thence. A yearning of unspeakable tenderness keeps you within her presence, mentally, wherever you may be from morn to dewy eve. And, when you return, she expects the friendly greeting; let her not be disappointed. Be assured her love would encircle you, if you were driven from the common ranks of men; her heart would be the truest pillow for your aching head. Her grace, her happiness, is the worthiest ornament for you now. Your strength is cold, repulsive, and forbidding, until it is combined and chastened by the gentleness and sweetness of your faithful, loving wife. Let her be cheered, then, to see upon the fringe of your garments, the clearness and the warmth of true celestial blue.

It is equally important that the firmness and clearness of truth, blended with the warmth and gentleness of love, should be visible in all our intercourse with our children. Firmness, without gentleness and cheerfulness, is painful and repulsive to children, and they shun the circle of its influence as much as possible. Softness, without firmness, strengthens their hankerings for selfish indulgences, and increases those disorderly demands which at length must be restrained with rigour, a hundred-fold more painful, or they must sink in ruin. Children look for just direction, and their sense of justice leads them readily to acquiesce in what is right when it comes from lips they love. Only let the true blue ribband be seen by your children always, and they will follow where you lead, and your counsel will be laws they will revere in your absence as well as in your presence; and when the music of your loved voice will be heard by them no more, its recollections within will be prized as the tones and the wisdom of those dearest and best-beloved ones who piloted them safely in the early walks of life, and still have only gone

before them, and are waiting to welcome them on the purer plains of heaven.

This attention to the very externals of the Christian life, is fraught with blessing every way. It is only thus, in fact, we can obtain strength to be healed of our spiritual diseases, and only thus we can exhibit the worth of our principles to others. When the poor woman who had spent her all upon helpless physicians for twelve years came to Jesus, she said within herself, If I but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole, and as soon as she did so, virtue went out, and she was healed.

In the hem of the vesture of Divine Truth, or in other words, in the literal sense of the Word of God, the divine virtue is ever present for the meek and lowly, and when it is touched by trusting love, that virtue will go out.

The prophet Zechariah, speaking of the glorious church of the latter days, the church which is now unfolding itself amongst us, the New Jerusalem, declares, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of all nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."—viii. 25. It is religion in life that is observed by, and is attractive to good men. When it not only enlightens the head and rules the heart, but comes down to the skirts of the garment, infusing justice, kindness, and courtesy into every act, and every word; then it has an eloquence which will inspire many a well-disposed heart to say, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. Let your good works, and your good words so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven."

While you pay due and supreme attention to the interior principles of love and faith, never forget the fringe. Let your religion come out. Be loving and truthful in little things. Let your daily duties, and daily expressions unbosom in them the spirit of heaven in their entire round, and thus upon the fringe let there be seen THE RIBBAND OF BLUE.

SERMON X.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ADONI-BEZEK.

"And Adoni-Bezek said, Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath required me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.—Judges i. 7.

So decidedly do the Scriptures intimate that a spiritual sense is contained within them, that most who revere the sacred oracles, are prepared to admit that statement to a greater or less extent. The parables, the visions, some portions of the prophecies, and much of the book of Psalms are believed to have spiritual lessons chiefly in view, but the historical parts of the Sacred Volume are less freely acknowledged to contain heavenly wisdom within their bosom. Yet it is interesting to remember, that the first literal history contained in the Divine Volume,—namely the history of Abraham, is declared by the apostle Paul, to be allegorical. "For it is written," said he, "that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh: but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."—Gal. iv. 22—26. It certainly seems not too much to conclude, that the apostle was led to select this early portion of the historical part of the Holy Word, and declare it to be a divine allegory, as, by a specimen to assure us, that the historical style, like every other style in the Word of God, is the medium of conveying to mankind those deep truths which are the lessons of Divine Wisdom. Besides this consideration, however, there are many others which lead to the same conclusion. That the Jewish nation was a typical as well as an historical one, is commonly admitted. "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly," Paul said

to the Romans, "neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."—Rom. ii. 28, 29. It is here stated, that he only, among the Jews, comes fully up to the divine appointment of that people, who in heart and spirit accepts those realities of which their laws and ceremonies were the symbols. Again, the journey of the Israelites to reach Canaan, is commonly admitted to be a divinely arranged chart, of the changes through which the soul passes, in the journey of the regeneration. Canaan is an acknowledged type of heaven, and the interiors of the human soul, where that heavenly state resides, of which it is said, "The kingdom of God is within you." And from these general admissions, it will follow that both the difficulties and the foes which the Israelites met with on their journey, and the idolatrous tribes which had to be overcome in the land of Canaan, were also typical of the difficulties through which the Christian has to pass, and the spiritual foes, the evil and perverted principles, he must extirpate from the Canaan of the soul.

And, here we may remark, that if the sublime lessons which unveil to us the early spiritual condition of mankind in pure allegory—such as the account of creation, the garden of Eden, the fall, and the whole of the early parts of the Scriptures are,—excite our admiration, and prove, by their perfect wisdom, their divine origin; how much more astonishing still, is that adorable Providence which we see conducting the affairs of the Jewish nation, so that from their earliest fathers down to their complete ruin, their history should be real and symbolical at the same time. Their kings, their priests, their prophets, were all real, and besides that, all typical: all outward events, yet all the types of inward principles. They were naturally useful for the Jewish nation; and by their history in the Word, and its correspondences, they are spiritually useful for all nations who understand the Word, and for all ages. We may surely exclaim here, "Thou hast exalted thy Word above all thy name."

With respect to the historical circumstances connected with our text, we may remark, Bezek was a city some seventeen miles from Shechem on the east, the capital of a small territory which had imposed a cruel and hateful rule over the petty kings around, and reduced them to abject misery. That these kings must have been very small chieftains is evident from the circumstance of Adoni-Bezek having maimed and enslaved seventy of them.

The name, Adon, means Lord, and Bezek may be inter-

preted, in or among the fetters. The Lord among the fetters, very properly designates a monarch of the character described in our text, in every point of view, and affords the proper basis for the Divine lesson intended to be conveyed in the Holy Word. This king made head, as the general leader of the Canaanites and Perizzites, against the people of Israel. Judah and Simeon were the leaders on Israel's side. The idolatrous nations were conquered with the loss of ten thousand men. The cruel tyrant was deprived of the extremities of his hands and feet, being treated as he had treated the numerous victims of his former wars. He was subsequently brought to Jerusalem, and there he died.

The history in its letter affords room for interesting and important moral reflections. It points to the retribution which certainly comes sooner or later to the wrong doer. The Most High rules among the kingdoms of men, and always in reality but often with amazing exactitude even in details, the sins of the wicked fall back upon themselves. History and private life both afford innumerable examples of the blows of guilty men being returned, with awful precision and increase, upon their own heads:—the tyrant of to-day becoming the slave of to-morrow; the contriver of a snare, being caught in his own net; and the oppressors of nations becoming the ruined captives, suffering alike from their pent up passions, and the scorn and execration of the world. The miserable king in our text, is an example and a type, of this retributive law of Providence. He had maimed and beggared others, and precisely the same lot became a portion for himself, until he ended his mutilated life by a captive's miserable death. Such is the illustration which even the letter of the Divine Word affords of a great practical truth illustrated in all the ways of Providence, and proclaimed by our Lord Himself,—“With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

Here, we may remark, appears an excellence of the doctrines of the New Church, of the highest value. The spiritual sense of the Word is not a denial of the letter, or a substitute for it. It is contained within it: it is the sap of the trees of the Lord: it is the soul of the body of the Word. Whatever lessons of virtue and use others can draw from the letter of the Bible, we can also draw. And, when they have exhausted with us their reflections on the outward history, we then, by the mercy of the Lord, in the dispensation He is opening in these latter days, can rise to the inexhaustible beauties of the spiritual sense. Having stood for a while on the lowest step of the sacred ladder,

which leads to heaven, we can then say, as we say now, Come up higher, friend.

The region over which Adoni-Bezek reigned, might possibly have obtained its name Bezek (among the fetters) from the fetters which it had long forged for the surrounding countries, and under which it held them in bondage. Its cruel tyranny, as well as its name, is the expressive symbol of the slavery of sin. Fetters enchain the body; false principles enslave the soul. Truth alone makes man free. False doctrines, false views, false maxims, false customs, confine and enchain the spirit. They make a Bezek, a city of chains, in the soul.

All outward slaveries are but the effect of inward slaveries. False opinions are the foundations which sustain all the tyrannies both of governments, and of evil customs and evil habits. People are first led to suppose that wrong is right, or if not right, necessary, and then they adopt it, or submit to it. Hence the great importance of the struggle for the truth. Illuminate the mind, and false opinions disappear. The chains which fetter men are truly the chains of deluded thought, the chains of folly and falsehood. The dupe becomes the willing or submissive slave, to what he fancies must be right, because some one whose dictum he obeys, has assured him it is so. Oh, that men would use their own great powers honestly. Just as their divine Creator has given them eyes, which serve them truly, and upon which they may depend in their outward walks in life; so has he given them spiritual eyes, powers of investigation and perception, upon which they may equally depend. To doubt it, is to doubt Him who has made us, and who is All-good and All-wise. Oh, that men would follow the teaching of that glorious Saviour who said, "Let thine eye be single and thy whole body shall be full of light." If the minds of men, unswayed by their own perversities, determined to investigate the truth, to act upon the truth, and no longer to be blind followers of the blind, how soon would they rise from the fetters which bind them to misery, up to the manhood, and the glorious liberty of the children of light.

False principles in relation to religion, are most potent to bind the soul. The most interior and deep-seated feelings of the heart being those which are intended to connect man with the Supreme, when they are misdirected, serve to crush him to the dust. The man who has been induced to believe that his God is a cruel, partial, or revengeful Being, has all his own generous instincts fettered. His better part, the germs of angelic love and holiness within him, are fettered at the core. Even, if he is taught

that God is unjust, confounding the innocent with the guilty ; that he is regardless of interior character, and only respects those of a particular creed, name, or dogma, this tends to cramp his own noble aspirations of goodwill and charity, and either to strengthen the worse part of his nature, or to fret the better. Every false doctrine is a chain, and every constituent fallacy a link, to bind the soul to darkness.

Who can tell what harm has been done by false views of God, of faith, of love, of duty, of immortality? Just as much as truth tends to elevate, so much does falsehood tend to depress.

If we suppose that God is selfish and arbitrary, the check upon our self-will, which exists when we contemplate the Deity as Sovereign Goodness, Sovereign Wisdom and Sovereign Order, in Divine Human Form, is not there ; and we easily become, or remain if we are naturally so, exacting and selfish too. Those whom we believe our God dislikes we readily condemn, and possibly, persecute. The better part of us is chained, the worse is at liberty. Even if we are told by those whom we suppose to know, that our life has really nothing to do with our preparation for heaven, it is only our faith ; that we cannot keep the commandments ; and much more are we unable to love our neighbour as ourselves ; to return good for evil ; to prepare, by a life of love to God and love to man, for a world in which these loves reign for ever, and bless in all things ; the best resolves are checked and weakened ; efforts which might result in an earnest Christian life, are blighted in the bud ; and the average of mankind in the professing religious world are kept in the low state of virtue, and true peace and blessedness, in which they confessedly remain. Too many dwell in Bezek, the land of chains.

In the irreligious world, too, how numerous are the chains which fetter the spirit to what is wrong. The persuasion that we are acting according to nature, when we are only indulging our vices ; the idea that worldly enjoyment is everything ; that religion is a painful deprivation ; the supposition that we cannot succeed in life, except by tricks, or overweening devotion to the body and to wealth ; the denial of God, the denial of Revelation, the denial of man's ability to will and to act, except as he is impelled by circumstances ; all these act as chains to fetter the nobler utterances of conscience, and keep multitudes dwelling in Bezek who often sigh for better things.

That the sinner is a slave, is not only the dictate of Revelation, " Whoso committeth sin is the servant," (or, as it might be better rendered), the slave of sin ; but he who strives to break his captivity, will speedily find it to be true. Habit has been

weaving round him invisible meshes, which, however, he will feel restraining and restricting him in every direction, when he seeks to quit the enchanted ground, on which his ruin was being completed. How strikingly is this sometimes seen in the drunkard. He has felt the galling slavery of his vice. The reproaches of conscience, the loss of comfort at home, the evident diminution of his children's respect, the loss of character, of means, of health, blow after blow lacerating him in mind and in body, make plain to him how galling is the slavery under which he exists. He vows he will break his fetters. He determines thenceforward to become another man. But soon his habits make him uneasy. He yearns after the missed cup at the accustomed time. The appetite increases. Inclination whispers, he can indulge a little, without going to excess; he can surely do as other people do; he perhaps has done wrong in changing too suddenly; possibly his health will suffer by the change; could not he defer the alteration for a short time, and enjoy himself this once? Appetite comes to the reinforcement of inclination, and the poor captive is led back to his slavery once more, and finds how true those divine words are—"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of Hosts."—Jer. ii. 19.

The sinner is a slave; he dwells in Bezek, the land of chains. There is only one way of escape, to cry to the Lord Jesus the Saviour, the Redeemer of Israel, for strength, and He will give deliverance, as He overthrew the Lord of Bezek by the instrumentality of Judah and Simeon.

And who is there that has felt the sad weight of evil, the wretchedness it engenders here, and the deeper misery to which it leads, does not respond in his inmost heart to the sigh for real freedom?—

"Where is the slave so lowly,
Confined by chains unholy,
Who could he burst
His chains at first,
Would pine beneath them slowly?"

We have considered the fetters which are represented by Bezek, let us now fix our attention for a time upon the Lord of Bezek. He is the representative of self-love. This principle, in its fallen state, is the terrible centre of all evil, of all slavery, and the secret origin of all falsehood. Self-love it is that forms the hidden soul of all wrong-doing. Why does the dishonest tradesman overreach, in his transactions, the man whom he should

serve justly? Because he loves himself so much, that he prefers his own slightest gain, to the other's just rights. Why does the highwayman go out to plunder the passing traveller, and take what, perhaps, is the hard-earned support of his family and himself? Undoubtedly, because the highwayman loves his own appetites so well, that, in comparison, the other's just subsistence or comforts, are as nothing. Why does the reckless speculator, for the least chance of enriching himself, tempt by misrepresentations, by highly-coloured and positively false descriptions, by hollow and urgent persuasions, and strive to obtain, as the means of prosecuting his daring and unwarranted schemes, the substantial support of probably thousands of families? Why, but because he prefers himself to all those families, and all their comforts and interests combined. Why does the ambitious tyrant, thirsting for conquest, and yearning to have the homage of a wider territory, send his armies to seize, to slaughter, and to plunder; involving hundreds of thousands in desolation and in death, involved in all those myriad crimes and curses, whose name is War? It must be, that he loves himself more than the well-being, the interests, and the lives of millions. And God forbids these crimes, and sinners know it. Why then do they resist, and defy the Will and the Wisdom of the Most High? Undoubtedly, because they prefer their own will, their own judgment, themselves, to God. Self, self, self, is the fountain of all evils; the idol which is worshipped as the central object of the evil soul; the Lord of Bezek. And self is dark, is hideous, savage; feeds on the empty pleasures of sense, creeps near the earth, and though it hides its horrid nature as much as possible under a fair profession, its beauty is only the skin-deep covering of malignity. Every one despises self in another. Every one feels conscious that his own selfhood would be despised as soon as seen. It is a serpent that reigns in the inner hell of an unregenerate heart. It is Lord in Bezek. Hence the selfishness of evil men, and evil spirits, taken together, is that serpent whose head the Lord Jesus came to bruise: "That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world."—Rev. xii. 9. What a picture is this! but it is true. The wise ancients knew that selfhood was a serpent, and they called it so, and made representations of it in this character. Their stupid descendants worshipped these very forms as deities in Egypt, in India, in China, and we shudder with disgust when we read of such prostration. But every worshipper of himself adores an idol within, quite as insatiable, as malignant, as abominable and more horrid, than any serpent that ever lived. He is there,

within us, with sub-inferentials for his court. There is Pride continually making his haughty exactions, and craving incessant homage. There is Envy gnawing himself with pain, at all excellence in others. There is Passion, burning with impatience, insisting upon having instant gratification, or instant destruction. There is Malignity, preparing constant poison for the objects of its inward hate. There is Fretfulness, ever bewailing itself, and weeping wormwood to embitter every half hour of human life. Anxiety is there, ever foreboding pain, misery and loss; and Revenge and Remorse are there, the first burning for fresh victims, and the latter, howling over those who have already fallen, and dreading the judgment to come. A whole tribe of polluted pleasures are there, which feed upon their own lives, and scatter dismay and death around.

Such is the court, say rather, the den of self-love. It is a devil in the form of a serpent, and this monster we obey and inwardly worship, so long as we continue in evil. And so long as he remains enthroned there, no real advance in true religion can be made. Hence the Lord says, "If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross, and follow me." We must make war upon the Lord of Bezek, by the command and in the strength of heaven. Until he is dethroned, there is no security, and no peace, in our Canaan.

But there is a curious particular mentioned in our text. Adoni-Bezek said: "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table." Of course this reveals a very cruel proceeding, but it is chiefly interesting to us in its representative character. A king in the spiritual sense, signifies a ruling principle. The number seven, or its compounds, here seventy, corresponds to what is *complete* and *holy*. Hence it is very commonly used in the sacred Scripture, where in such cases as the seven days of the week, the clean beasts taken by sevens, the seven sprinklings of the leper, the seven washings of Naaman, the seven spirits of God, the seven stars, the seven churches, the representation of that number, manifestly appears. In the Hebrew language, the same word which signifies seven, signifies also, perfect. The seventy kings, then, under the table, represent all the holy truths which have been received into the mind since infancy, and are, when Adoni-Bezek reigns, dejected, powerless, and despised. The seventy disciples, whom the Lord sent out, have a similar signification. They are said to be under the table, because the natural understanding, furnished with instruction, is like a table supplied with food. To be under the table, is to be

only in the memory, among things little thought of and despised. The portrait drawn is the state of the irreligious man, and of the unregenerated portion of the soul, in a mind yet desirous of being brought into the harmony of heaven. It is the abode of a foul tyrant, where luckless captives are maimed, helpless, and down-trodden. Seventy kings lie in miserable mutilation under the table. It is a den of thieves. All that is holy is sunk and crushed there. My beloved hearers, how is it with you? From infancy, through childhood, many royal principles of heavenly truths have been taught you, and commissioned from the King of kings to rule in various departments of the mind, and bring you into heavenly order. Are they reigning, or are they suffering? If self-love is your master passion, they will be dethroned and captive. All those sacred messengers of heaven, introduced by a good mother's early hymns, by a virtuous father's counsels, by the lessons of worthy friends and teachers, by faithful preachers, by your own readings of the Divine Word, in earlier, better days, all lie captive, and a vile monster reigns, terrible and desolating to you, abhorred of angels and good men, making all around him, a little hell. O wrestle with these "principalities and powers," as the apostle calls them, "these spiritual wickednesses in high places." Range yourselves under the banner of Him, the adorable Conqueror of death and hell, who alone can give the power to take this strong man's palace, and to spoil his goods, for He is stronger than he.

But, it had been the cruel practice of Adoni-Bezek to cut off the thumbs and great toes of his captives. Let us enquire what this strange conduct imports.

All the parts of the human body are correspondences of principles in the soul; and are so used in the sacred Scriptures. The heart, the eyes, the head, the reins, are used manifestly to correspond to mental principles, and so are the arms, hands, fingers, legs, and feet.

The arms, are the extremities which proceed from the breast, and denote the powers of affection and thought which flow from love to our neighbour, and the truth connected with that love. When we seek to advance our neighbour in real good and happiness, it is helping him with the right arm and hand. When we endeavour to assist him in intelligence, and lead him to higher views, we are assisting him with the left arm and hand.

The powers of the Divine Being himself are thus described: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou hast made strong for thyself."—Ps. lxxx. 17. The man of thy right hand, is the man who is influenced by the

power of love. "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."—Ps. cxxxix. 9, 10. However far we may be led into the turmoil of earthly thought, of care, and trouble, the powers of the Divine Love and Wisdom, the two hands of Deity, will sustain and preserve us.

The finger of God means the Divine Power applied to some particular circumstance. Hence the Lord said: "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."—Luke xi. 20.

The hands of man are equally correspondences in the Word. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."—Ps. xxiv. 4. To have clean hands, is to have the powers of the mind directed by goodness and truth. The Lord uttered a precept, strange in sound, but important in spirit, when he said, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off."—Mark ix. 43. Its import is, if the power of the mind has been perverted by evil, reject such power, cast it from thee.

To be delivered out of the power of any one, is constantly, both in scriptural and common language, called, being delivered out of their hand. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man."—Ps. lxxi. 4.

The feet are the lowest portion of the body, the extremities of the members which issue from the trunk of the human form. Upon them the body rests, and by their means it progresses. They represent the practical powers of life. The aspirations of the mind in daily duty. Upon these the mind rests; upon these it advances. There is no progression by contemplation, it is by act. The right principles we look at, do not improve us, but those we do.

The powers of life, in the practice of daily duty, as the feet of the spiritual man, constantly meet us in the Word. "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord: for he shall pluck my feet out of the net."—Ps. xxv. 15. "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."—Ps. xl. 2. Where it is manifest that to establish the life in accordance with divine truth, is to place the feet upon a rock. Again: "Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about." "The iniquity of my heels, is the evil which tempts us in our daily practices." Many, alas! have fancied that reli-

gion has nothing to do with daily life. They admit that the eyes, and perhaps the heart, have something to do with it, but not the feet. How different from the practical life which the Word really inculcates, and which the New Jerusalem proclaims and restores. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Ps. cxxii. 2), is the language of the true believer. "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy feet to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber."—Ps. cxxi. 2, 3. "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."—Ps. cxvi. 7—9. This walking religion, is the only real religion, be assured, my beloved hearers. All intention, all fancy, all talk, all promises of what you will sometime be, are vain, illusory, and fleeting as a dream, until they are fixed in a virtuous daily life. We have not anything strained and extraordinary to perform, to live the life of true religion; we have, in our usual avocation, but to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God," and we are sunned in the smile, and strengthened by the power of the King of heaven. To do each act, as our duty presents it, in the spirit of love and light, seems a little thing; but "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."—Luke xvi. 10.

The whole effort of real religion is to spread itself over our daily life—to do the will of God in each act. The grand effort of irreligion, is to oppose this daily dedication of ourselves to right, to faith, and to love. If it can nullify our virtue practically, and make what we know of none effect now, it is little concerned about the future. One evil done, outweighs a thousand virtuous acts, only intended. Evil cares very little for religious truths in the memory, so that itself reigns in the heart and in the life. This is precisely what is represented by the kings under the table having the thumbs and great toes cut off. They represent truths shorn of their effect in act,—truths maimed and mutilated, which perform nothing, but remain hidden and depressed until they die. They are heavenly things known, but not done, and therefore have no blessing.

It was, no doubt, in reference to this important lesson, that in the consecration of Aaron and his sons, it was directed to take the blood of a ram and "put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of the

right foot."—Ex. xxix. 20. And when Christians devote themselves to become spiritual priests, to offer up living sacrifices to Him who is God and the Lamb, we must ever apply the living blood of Divine Wisdom to the very extremes of the soul. The tip of the ear must be touched with this blood to denote the complete and actual obedience with which we hearken to the divine commands, the thumb of the right hand to shew that we will seek our neighbour's good by every effort of benevolent kindness, and the great toe of the right foot to intimate that in the fullest measure, we will act justly, in our daily avocation. Thus we become actual, not theoretical, servants of Him who ministers to all.

In the cleansing of the leper, the blood of the offering was to be "put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." And, afterwards, "The priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger some of the oil that is in his left hand seven times before the Lord: and the priests shall put of the oil that is in his hand, upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot"—Lev. xiv. 25—28. When the leper of sin is to be cleansed, it can only be done by applying the truth, the living blood of the Lamb, to his absolute acts. He must actually obey, actually operate the deeds of kindness, actually do unto others what he would have them do to him, and if he has done this first from truth, he will soon be able to do it from the soft meekness of heavenly love. First do it with blood, and then with oil; first from duty, and then from delight.

When Adoni-Bezek was taken, he was deprived of his thumbs and great toes, and rendered helpless, as he had rendered others. And, now we are prepared to see one of the most essential truths connected with man's regenerate life,—the mode in which man's character can be changed, consistent with the laws of the soul. After the vileness of selfish opposition to God has become revealed to us, in the light of heaven, in the fervour of our first love, we would, if we were able, take a scalping-knife, and cut it completely out of our being. But it is not possible. Evil is so interwoven with our spiritual organization, that were it at once to be all eradicated, the whole man would be gone. "We are full of wounds, and bruises and putrefying sores." The Lord alone can alter the interiors, and does so with a merciful and patient hand. "He does not quench the smoking flax, nor

break the bruised reed, but he brings forth judgment unto truth."—Isa. xlii. 3. He said of the inhabitants of earthly Canaan, "By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land."—Ex. xxiii. 30. This is a necessity of our nature, and cannot be departed from. Sight may be given quickly, but changed affections can only be imparted slowly. The structure of character, which is to last for ever, can only be obtained by steady perseverance in the right. But, if we cannot destroy, or have destroyed (for the Lord is the great worker in this), selfishness, and all its attendant evils at once, what can be done? This can be done; it can be rendered powerless in act: and this is our province and our duty. Resist evil in act, resist it in word. Take care that no selfish act, to militate against our neighbour's good, be done. Take care that no evil operate in our ordinary walk. This we can do. We cannot, for a time, avoid the promptings to wrong; the old man will weigh upon us, and desire to have the dominion still. But we must steadily resist him, in act. This is to cut off the thumbs and great toes of Adoni-Bezek. We must not give him an inch of influence, in practice. It is not that which cometh into a man which defileth him, but that which goeth out. Here, then, we must resist, and here, by the power of the Lord Jesus, we can. The commandments of the Lord are nearly all negative; they tell us what not to do: because our grand safety first lies in shunning evil, in act. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. "This is the love of God, if ye keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous."—1 John v. 3. "Blessed are they that keep his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."—Rev. xxii. 14.

This, then, is the spiritual import of cutting off the extremities of this wicked lord of fetters. O may it be deeply impressed upon us all. Let us, my beloved brethren, deny self, conquer self, abolish self, in act, and thus co-operate with our Lord, who will fight for us and conquer it within, and reveal within us all the peace of sin subdued and heaven revealed.

We are finally informed, "They brought him (Adoni-Bezek) to Jerusalem, and there he died."

Jerusalem, as you are aware, is the emblem of the Church. The Church, on a grand scale, consists of all those who in mind, heart, and life, acknowledge the Lord, and live according to His Divine will. The apostle calls it the heavenly Jerusalem. "Ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God;

the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."—Heb. xii. 22. One mind which has raised its inmost love as a mountain from which it adores the Lord, and surrounded itself with the doctrines of divine truth for a wall of defence, and a city in which it dwells, has come to the heavenly Jerusalem. There it rests as in an impregnable city, and there it has intercourse with angels. It has become itself angelic. It thinks as angels think. It loves as angels love. In its atmosphere, selfishness cannot breathe, cannot live. When we come to Jerusalem, Adoni-Bezek dies. This is the land of love, of disinterestedness, of purity. The Lord it owns is He who is love itself, and ministers to the whole universe. The law of this great country is, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and running over, shall men give into your bosoms.

"To Jesus be praise without end,
For glories revealed in His word;
We see the new city descend,
Adorned as a bride for her Lord.

"Here nothing can enter unclean;
No evil can breathe in the air:
No gloom of affliction is seen;
No shadow of darkness is there."

Before quitting this interesting subject, let us notice the two leaders of the Israelites, Judah and Simeon. "The children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him."

The sons of Israel were representative, like everything else, under the law. Hence each name was divinely given, and is constantly employed with exact discrimination. Their births are related to shadow forth the order in which holy principles are born in the soul. The first son was Reuben, whose name signifies, he hath seen. The second was Simeon, which term in Hebrew means, he hath heard. The third was Levi, the word for conjunction; and the fourth was Judah, which imports praise Jehovah. This is the very order in which holy things are produced in the soul when we are returning to God. First we

see what is right, then we hearken to, that is, obey it; we next determine to conjoin faith and works together always, and then we have born within us that grateful love to the Lord which impels us to bless and praise Him for all His mercies. Love to the Lord, therefore, is Judah, and obedience to him is Simeon. The Canaanites and Perizzites represent evils and false principles in general.

To overcome the opposition of impiety and error, then, and especially to subdue self-love in the soul, it was not without meaning that Judah was selected to lead, with Simeon for his coadjutor. How can self-love be dethroned, but by the power derived from the love of the Saviour,—love, not as a barren sentiment, but as a principle which is ever accompanied by obedience. “If ye love me,” the Lord says, “keep my commandments.”

Our Divine Director calls for love to Him, to lead us in our holy warfare against selfishness and sin. Without this, we cannot succeed; and if this principle be genuine, it will always call for Simeon. With love and obedience, we shall never fail. However strong Adoni-Bezek seems, he will fall before these saving powers, and the Divine Saviour for whom, and under whom, they act. Their strength is not their own; it is His who is Almighty. In His name and by His power we can assuredly conquer, and what a conquest is that which is achieved when the hell within is subdued and destroyed. It is like the extinguishment of a volcano: it is the obliteration of present and future restlessness and misery. This is the great warfare to which all men are called,—the Divine Crusade. Without this conquest all other achievements are unavailing. If self be unconquered, every flower of life has in it a destructive worm,—every heart contains a plague.

Be not dismayed, my beloved hearers, at the thought of undertaking this all-important work. Have the faith which springs from love. We are well able to accomplish it. Let Judah come forth to lead: love will join us to angels, and to Him who first loved us. He will nerve us for this encounter with self. He will impart His own likeness to us. He has led us the way. The Divine love which condescended to wear our nature, to live in it, to suffer in it, to die in it, to sanctify it, and glorify it,—not for himself, but for us,—will teach us to follow Him, and overcome, even as He overcame. We can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us. Never let us doubt, since He has the keys of death and hell. Be of good courage: all the powers

of evil will be extinguished within you ; heaven will be opened and formed ; Jehovah Jesus has descended,—lived, and died, and risen again,—that He might be Lord of the dead and the living.

“ Amazing mercy ! love immense !
Surpassing ev'ry human sense,
Since time and sense began
That man might shun the worlds of pain,
And know and love his God again,
His God became a man.”

SERMON XI.

THE VICTORY OVER THE MIDIANITES.

"And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."—Judges vii. 20.

WAR, though sometimes a sad necessity, is never an object upon which the Christian loves to dwell. Hence, probably, without a perception of the spiritual sense of the Word, the history of Israel's wars would form its least valued portion. We shudder to read of the extermination of cities and nations. And, though it may be said, and with justice, that the nations which were to be rooted out of Canaan were so sunk in pollution, so inveterately corrupt, that ridding the world of them was like ridding the body of fearful cancers, which unless extirpated would destroy the sufferer's life; so that the surgeon's knife is merciful, yet, the operation is not agreeable, as an object of contemplation. We would rather not ponder upon the means, however beneficial the end. To such a state of mind, it sometimes occurs as a question, why the relation of wars should form part of the Word of God? We answer, for the sake of the spiritual sense, There are wars in which every one must engage, and these were represented by the wars of Israel. This consideration raises the narrative of battles in the Sacred Scriptures, at once, to a divine and necessary character. We greatly need to be instructed how to fight, and how to conquer, in the warfare with self and sin. It is alike, a manifestation of Divine care and Wisdom to enable us to say with the psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: my goodness and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me."—Ps. cxliv. 1, 2.

That we have all much to struggle against and subdue, is one of the first lessons we should learn: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth," saith our Lord, "I came not to send

peace, but a sword."—Matt. x. 34. Though peace is the ultimate object to be attained in the soul, it is only to be obtained by struggle. Happy is he who learns this lesson early, and begins this struggle soon.

To recognize the necessity of a severe and constant strife against the disorderly propensities of our nature, we need only to reflect that peace and happiness can only exist, where love to God and charity to man are the ruling principles of life. They flow from one fountain, God, and love is the channel down which they descend. Interior rest can only be found in God; outward comfort can only be, when we are in kindly harmony with men. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love: there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." The convictions of our inmost highest nature are in agreement with these declarations: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."—Rom. vii. 22, 23.

This is the universal experience. The mind of man is naturally like two hostile camps. In the higher region are principles of innocence, hope, love, justice, trust, kindness, purity, and tenderness,—those angels of the soul; "For of such is the kingdom of heaven." In the lower regions of the soul, are seen and felt, selfishness, pride, vanity, contempt for others, injustice, faithlessness, harshness, impurity, and violence, and of such is the kingdom of hell.

There can be no peace between these two. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."—Is. lvii. 20, 21. Life is a state of conflict, both for the virtuous and the evil. The virtuous, however, strive on the side of heaven, and they are assisted by heavenly powers, and by the Saviour Himself. They have often cessations of warfare, seasons of blessing, and their end is peace. The wicked struggle against their better part; they oppose their inner convictions; they stifle the voice of conscience; they smother their nobler impulses; they harden themselves against God and goodness. Again, and again, they resist the calls of virtue, religion, and right, and take the side of self-indulgence, pollution, and wrong, until all that is heavenly is scared from the breast, and they deliver themselves up to the unending dominion of passions and lusts, which have only ceased to struggle against heavenly influences, to prey upon one another. Little comfort had the wicked man before he gave the victory to his lusts, but less has he now. The

harpies of his depraved appetites incessantly harass and worry each other, His spirit is like a dark forest in which fierce animals prowl and fight : "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

It is in reflecting light upon these mental struggles, and affording guidance to the earnest Christian, that the history of the wars of the Israelites are of inestimable value. Let us trace and apply the lesson in the narrative before us. The Israelites had been much infested by three nations in their immediate neighbourhood, the Amalekites, the Midianites, and a people called the children of the east. They oppressed them with a cruel hand ; they destroyed even the means of subsistence, as we are informed in the preceding chapter. "And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them ; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass."—ver. 3, 4.

These people, at least the Amalekites, and the Midianites, were descendants from Abraham indirectly, and inhabited the borders of Canaan on the south, south-east and east. They were at the land, but not in the land. Hence they correspond to the principles of those who border on the Church, but are not in it. They know and believe what the Gospel teaches in a certain fashion, but do not love and do it. They are opposed to, and hasten to destroy, a growing and progressive religion. They assailed Israel most cruelly on their march, and came, as recorded in the narrative before us, to exterminate the rising corn.

We will endeavour to investigate more closely the threefold foe indicated in the Divine history, and we shall then probably see more fully the appropriateness of the preparation by Gideon for their discomfiture, and the important lesson indicated by the mode of attack, mentioned in our text. They were all at this time deadly enemies of Israel. The Amalekites were the most malignant. It is recorded of them that they insidiously hung around the Israelites on their march, and when any remained behind from weakness or weariness they were put to death by these lurking and harassing foes. "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt ; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindermost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary ; and he feared not God."—Deut. xxv. 17, 18. Amalek was the most powerful foe of Israel, during the pilgrimage in the wilderness, as well as the most malignant. "Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish

for ever.”—Numb. xxiv. 20. Amalek has an awful peculiarity of notice from Jehovah: “And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: for he said, because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”—Ex. xvii. 14—16.

From all this it is not difficult to draw the inference that Amalek must be the representative of some peculiarly deadly principle, some malignant strong delusion, to which the spirit of the Lord is incessantly opposed. There are times in our journey of life, when we feel weary and toilworn. When we are tired of our struggles against our evils and our difficulties, and become almost hopeless. Life seems hollow and a blank. We are weary with the world and with ourselves. Perhaps, high hopes have been blighted. The fair prospects we once had, have gradually receded until they have vanished. Disappointments and losses have perhaps been added to internal vexations, and we are sadly pining over the disappearance of many a golden vision. At such times the deadly fallacy will break in upon us. Give up; throw all good aside; strive no longer. Do as other people do: get as much sinful pleasure and sinful gain as you can, and take your chance with the millions who are reckless. This is Amalek. Many a poor weak soul, battered and down-cast in the struggle of life, has sunk under this direful despairing suggestion, which comes into the soul from fiends who have a malignant joy in man's ruin, and like the withering hot blast of the desert, ruins and wastes all before it. This is Amalek,—subtle, terrible, despair-creating. Under its influence spirits often become paralyzed, and a melancholy downward course is terminated in a ruin, at which pity shudders and turns mournfully away. Oh! that men would learn to remember that this principle of despairing delusion is abhorrent to the Divine Love. “Jehovah has war with Amalek, from generation to generation.”

Never despair, should be the motto of life. The objects we fondly follow, are often only gilded snares. To grant our requests would frequently be less merciful than to refuse them. Divine Wisdom sees better how to promote our real good than we ourselves do, and Divine Love infinitely cares for us. Let us be confiding and content: “Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.” Let us welcome the sifting, which removes from us our chaff, but secures to us the wheat. Let us submit our own wills to the directions of unchanging, unerring mercy, and all will be well.

Let love and faith, like Caleb and Joshua, hold up our hands when we are assailed by Amalek, and power will descend from heaven to give us the victory, and change our despairing thoughts into joys, hopes, and blessings unspeakable. Amalek with his black troop will fly, and to their place ministering angels will succeed.

The Midianites were not always enemies of Israel. They were traders and intermediates between Egypt and Canaan. Midianites drew Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites—thus saving his life. That they were representative, is evident from their being mentioned in the prophetic part of the Scriptures, as taking part in operations of the future Church, in times when Midian, as a distinct nation or tribe, would long have ceased to be. In the glorious state of things described by Isaiah—which can have no fulfilment in anything less than an eminently exalted state of the Christian Church, such as has not yet ever been attained, it is said, “The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.”—Isa. lx. 6. On the other hand, in that sublime and mysterious vision of the prophet Habakkuk, in which the end of the Jewish dispensation is portrayed; the prophet says, “I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation.”—Hab. iii. 7, 8.

Midian, then, sometimes the friend and sometimes the foe of the Church; sometimes assisting the praises of the Lord, and sometimes covering the soul with curtains which tremble before the judgment and presence of the Lord, is the type of that kind of general belief in the doctrines of religion, which may lead to something better, but in which great numbers often rest, so as to make a profession of a kind of faith which is not saving, because neither grounded in love, nor flowing into practice. The children of the east, the coadjutors of the two former, represent all such portions of the Scriptures, as can be pressed into the service of an inward aversion to God and goodness, but combined with an outward profession of piety and regard for holiness.

The three enemies then, taken together, typify a sort of religion, practically and interiorly setting love and goodness at nought, but at the same time covering this by pious pretences and false views of God, His dealings, and His Word. Such is

the religion of a large portion of mankind. The true end of religion is to make men into angels, and to promote the population of heaven. This can only be done by a Church which subdues selfishness, and raises up justice grounded in love. That religion whose principles are pure, and whose practice is in harmony with its principles, can alone bring the human soul into harmony with heaven, and make it possible to enter there. A religion which only cries believe, believe, believe, may be prevalent, and may even be universal, and still its professors may be real enemies of the genuine Israel of God: of those who are endeavouring, by Divine Mercy, to cultivate in their souls that heavenly harvest which is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

The devils believe and tremble. "If we have all faith, and have not charity, we are nothing" (1 Cor. xii. 2.) The true Israel of God, the church which strives to follow the Lord Jesus in the regeneration, which shews it loves him by keeping his commandments, is oppressed when such systems of faith without love, profession without practice, piety without justice, prevail. Mankind sink under the dominion of such principles when they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. How the watchful care of our Heavenly Father delivers us from such principles, is the grand lesson of the work before us.

First, the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, who was threshing wheat by the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites (Judges vi. 11). The Lord selects such to be leaders in His cause, as they are quietly cultivating the interior virtues of religion; discriminating between what is substantially good, and what is only apparently so: such as, in practice, are saying, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" Gideon is doing this, by the wine-press, because the wine-press corresponds to the *rational faculty*: that principle whose office it is to press out the wine of heavenly truth, from the letter in which God gives it to man.

In evil times, when folly and wickedness abound, the man whom God will choose for His enterprizes is he who in secret ponders over His will and service; he who determines for himself, unswayed by custom or by fashion, what is good and acceptable in the sight of God his Saviour: he who does not stray from what his reason enables him to acknowledge to be right, but lives spiritually by the heavenly sustenance he thus quietly obtains. This man is a spiritual Gideon, and sooner or later will the angel of the Lord announce to him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (ver. 13).

The next circumstance which is especially worthy of remark

is, the mode by which the men of Gideon's army were to be selected. They were to be taken to the water, and the Lord would distinguish who should be accepted by the manner in which he drank. So he brought down the people unto the water; and the Lord said unto Gideon, "Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down on his knees to drink. And the number of them that lappeth, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lappeth will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man into his place."—ver. 5—7.

This remarkable test is full of instructive interest. The people are led to the water: and so must it ever be with those who are to become spiritually victorious; they must be brought to drink of the heavenly water—the truth of the Word of God. The prophet announces this: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."—Is. lv. 1. The Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."—John iv. 10. To receive those truths which teach the necessity of purity in heart and life, as the very path to heaven, which illustrate the purity of the Lord—of His divine law and His everlasting kingdom,—this is to drink of the water of life.

But those alone who lapped as a dog lappeth, putting their hand to their mouth, would be the only ones permitted to do the work of the Lord. To lap as a dog lappeth, is to take Divine Truth eagerly; not to be dainty and difficult with it, but earnest. Putting the hand to the mouth, also intimates that it should be done with the soul's whole might; and such only is the mode in which we can at any time be prepared to overcome in the contests of life. If we are hesitating and uncertain in our acceptance of the truth; very nice, in the when, the where, and the how, we shall acknowledge our adherence to it; rather patronizing it, than accepting it as our law and guide; we are not warriors whom God will own, but such as will hear the words, "Let the other people go every man to his own place."

O may this salutary lesson sink deeply into our hearts, and make us earnest! The struggle with our sins is no child's play: the evils of the heart are mighty, the fallacies of the mind are numerous, specious, and strong. Nothing but their overthrow

will really prepare us for heaven. The reason why so much ineffective religion exists in the world, so little enjoyment of peace and blessing from the Lord, which come only from conquered sin, is, that so many read and hear the Word with listless half-heartedness, not as the truth of the Eternal God, the message of life and death, the summons to work, upon obedience to which, our everlasting weal depends. O may we, my beloved hearers, be deeply impressed with the serious character of life, and life's business; and when we come to hear or read the truth, may we do so with an earnest appetite, and a rivetted attention, "putting our hand to our mouth!"

The men who were thus selected by God to be led on by Gideon, were three hundred, and were to be formed into three companies. Thus there are three kinds of enemies on the one side, and three companies of friends on the other.

But let us next notice the remarkable equipment of Gideon's soldiers. They were to be furnished with trumpets in their right hands, to blow withal, and pitchers in their left hands, each containing a lamp lighted within.

This method of arming would scarcely be effectual in modern times, but it appears to have entirely succeeded on this occasion. A sudden panic seized the hearts of the oppressors; they quailed before the advancing friends of freedom, and flew in the utmost terror away; numbers of them slew each other, and Israel was completely delivered.

The Christian's armour both for offence and defence is obtained from the Word of God. When properly equipped, however, to oppose the Amalekites, Midianites, and children of the east which trouble him; he has always the trumpet in his right hand, and the pitcher with the lamp in his left. When he speaks of the evils which are to be shunned, and the virtues which are to be done, he lifts up his voice like a trumpet. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins."—Isa. lviii. 1. The trumpet with all its varied notes of joy and wail, of vigour and of triumph, is an expressive symbol of the proclamation of the Gospel. The solemn yet glorious invitation to a happy home in heaven, is like the clear, joyous, heart-exhilarating note of a silver trumpet, and "Blessed are the people that hear the joyful sound." The utterance of the divine commands to shun and extirpate our evils, is as the sounding of a charge to battle, while the grateful outburst of thanksgiving, when we feel we have conquered, is indeed a trumpet of victory. In our conflicts, then, against sin and error, especially against

such subtle forms of them as veil themselves with specious fallacies of a deference for God and His Word, we must be well grounded in the knowledge of what the will of the Most High is really proclaimed to be. We must have trumpets in our right hands.

The point to which all real religion converges is the keeping of God's commandments, from a spirit of love and faith in Him. "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" The point to which all irreligion converges is to resist, or to neglect the commandments of God. All true religion tends to obedience, all irreligion to disobedience. Atheism declares there exists no Deity, and therefore He can have given no commands. Deism admits a Deity, but says He has given no special revelation to man, and therefore there are no commandments to which we need attend from Him. The practical result is the same, disavowal of God's commandments, and a life according to our own will. Amidst a crowd of professed religions, precisely the same object is attained, and to a far greater extent; for few men are satisfied to have no religion, and these with great effort constantly keep down the demands of their nature for God. The great mass demand and acknowledge a religion, but invent some specious perversion under that venerable name, which still leaves them the practice of such sins of omission or commission as they feel naturally inclined to retain. This compound of unwillingness to change, combined with reverence for God and revelation, which the acceptance of religion requires, is often seen.

Vast numbers substitute for a change of heart and life, certain ceremonies, to which they ascribe immense importance; and if these are done, the weightier matters may be without danger omitted. Others suppose that forgiveness by a priest at periodical times will secure their pardon from the Deity, however His divine laws are slighted, and their evil passions are unconquered. Others, again, suppose their lot to have been fixed before the world began, and they cannot presume to attempt to alter it. While an immense number trust that the Lord Jesus suffered the punishment due to sin, and at any time when they believe this, His holiness and merit are attributed to them, and they are, from that moment, at death, or whenever the instant of faith may be, as fully saved, and as completely righteous, as the most devoted saint or highest angel. These views, however varied, in other respects, unite in this,—they induce neglect of the commandments of God, a persistence in the evils we love, and pre-

vent religion from really transforming us into the likeness of the grand Head of the Church, and Fountain of all excellence.

The opposition to practical and progressive religion by such compounds of secret aversion to goodness, and partial acceptance and real perversion of the truths of revelation is represented by Amalek, Midian, and the children of the east in the struggle before us. When the young Christian has received the good seed of the Word, and is watching its growth in the soul, desiring really to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and fruits meet for heaven, these false persuasions come on like a devastating foe. "When Israel had sown, the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them, and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth. And Israel was greatly impoverished, because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites."—Judges vi. 3, 4, 7. When those who are represented by these foes of Israel see tender souls wishful to live for heaven, careful to conform to the commandments of God, it is not uncommon for them to ask, How do you expect to be saved? The conscientious Christian replies, Through Divine help, walking according to the commandments of the Lord. Keeping the commandments! keeping the commandments! Why you surely don't expect to go to heaven that way? You are depending then upon your own righteousness! You are undervaluing Christ's atonement! You are sure to be lost! You are neglecting the way of faith! Man is saved by faith, and faith only, without the deeds of the law. But surely the sincere seeker for purity and peace rejoins, We are to keep God's commandments. Oh no, it has nothing to do with salvation! That is buying heaven with your own works. You are in a very wrong way indeed. The commandments have nothing to do with salvation. They were not given to be kept, only to shew us what God's requirements are, and convince us how impossible it is to keep them, so as to drive us to another path—the path of faith in Christ as our substitute. Such persuasions, urged with vigour, bring the spirit into doubt, until some heaven-inspired Gideon comes to arm the oppressed and suffering servants of the Lord. And first the trumpets are placed in their right hands to blow withal. Or, in other words, they are well furnished with those plain declarations of the will of the Lord which so abundantly declare the necessity of practical obedience, as altogether essential to salvation. And this the whole Word supplies. It commences with the opening of divine

revelation, and is repeated to the last chapter. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door"—Gen. iv. 7. "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 for ever."—Deut. v. 29. "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us."—Deut. vi. 24, 25. "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which you shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.—Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."—Psalm xix. 7, 8. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isa. xlvi. 18. "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in NO CASE enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 19, 20. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—Matt. xix. 17. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."—1 John v. 2, 3. "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—Rev. xxii. 14.

The Divine Word on these great subjects, and all thus connected with the weighty concerns of love to God and man, gives no uncertain sound. It is a true, clear blast from heaven. Its glorious proclamation even is, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. xiii. 18. "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God."—1 Cor. 7, 19. Faith is a means to effect obedience, but not a substitute for it. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not

charity, I am nothing.”—1 Cor. xiii. 2. The Word of God as a trumpet, then, is the Word proclaiming goodness, and denouncing sin: the Word insisting on supreme love to the Lord testified by shunning evil, and doing His holy will. The people were ordered to shout “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,” because their armour represented the Word of God, and “the sword of the spirit is the Word of God.”—Eph. vi. 17. This Word is quick and powerful, and 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.

But, besides the trumpets in their right hands, the people were to hold pitchers in their left hands containing lamps (ver. 20). And these pitchers are the types of the Word of God, but of those portions where its divine truth is not so manifest to all, being a light within, but covered round, as it were, in a pitcher. From such portions as are thus covered to come down to the state of the natural man, it is, chiefly, that obstinate errors derive their support. They lean on the letter that killeth, and neglect the spirit, which giveth life (2 Cor. iii. 6). Like the veil which was put on the face of Moses in mercy at first, until the Jews could bear to look on the inner light, but was afterwards retained by them on their hearts, as St. Paul says, even to his day; so the letter of the Word which is intended as the first step of the ladder let down from heaven to give us the means of rising to the upper ones. But the natural man, who does not desire to become spiritual, will have the letter, and nothing else. The pitcher is all in all to him, and not the light which it contains. The soldiers of Gideon, however, knew that their pitchers contained lamps, and were prepared, when necessary, to break the pitcher, and shew the light. Let it be borne in mind now, that a state of mind is pictured in the warfare before us, which is infested by a specious but false religion; interiorly opposed to all real growth in goodness, signified by the deadly Amalek, presenting some scheme as a substitute for actual regeneration. Often, such a persuasion will represent the Deity, as they say, infinitely just, but really fierce, harsh, and selfish; and appeal to his dealings with man in the garden of Eden. Did He not there, say they, command that the tree of knowledge should not be touched upon pain of death to Adam and his posterity for ever? Was not this threat put into execution? Did not death come upon all, and would it not have so continued, had not Christ brought back the favour of God for all who believe that He died for them. Is not then salvation from the wrath of God by belief only. Such, and

such like, are the reasonings founded on the letter, without any perception of the spirit of the Holy Word. They belong to the pitcher, and not to the light. The soldiers of Gideon are instructed to break the pitchers, and shew the light; or, in other words, to penetrate through the letter, and expose the spirit of divine revelation. They know, and they explain, that the garden of Eden was an inward state of mind, and its trees were the principles there. When man turned to his own knowledge, instead of feeding on the life-giving principles of love and wisdom from God, he inflicted death upon himself, the only death the good man dreads. God cautioned him against it before-hand, but could only save him from it so long as he wished to be saved. He who sins, sinks into death, and can only fly from death, by flying from sin. "To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. viii. 6. Christ came to deliver us from sin, by giving us the power to rise above it, and out of it, not to substitute what He did, for what we have to do. Come to Him, my beloved hearers, for life, the actual life of love and goodness. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (John x. 10). He came, the very God, against whom man sinned in Eden; came to reach us, to save us, to give us life. He lived, and died, and rose again, that He might be to us a Saviour from sin, and thus from death and hell.

Oh, but, it will be sometimes said, we cannot come to Christ unless the Father draw us. Is it not written, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him? Here again we must break the pitcher, and shew the light. The Father is the Divine Love, this is the principle of the Deity which is the Father of all things. This principle was the moving cause of redemption. In His love, and in His pity, He redeemed us. This Father must indeed draw us, before we can come to Christ and be taught. But He never fails to draw. His warmth pervades the spiritual universe, like that of the sun pervades the solar system; and as this latter draws up all the juices of vegetation to bring forth flowers and fruits, so does the attractive influence of the love of God draw us.

This is the sun of the spiritual system. Jehovah is the everlasting light. He draws for ever. He has been drawing us ever since we were born. He will still draw us, so long as we have anything within us upon which His love can act. But he never draws capriciously, warming and drawing this man, and refusing that, in equal circumstances. The Father is the Divine Love. It is infinite. It says for ever, "Can a woman forget her suck-

ing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee." This is our Father. Never let us attribute to him our want of salvation and happiness. He desires to save us, infinitely more than we can desire to be saved. The Father, in Christ, is the fountain of every blessing. Is it said, again, that the Lord limited salvation again, when He said, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom (or to whom) it is prepared of my Father."—Matt. xx. 23. Look again, through the letter, to the spirit. The Father is the Divine Love. How could any one enter and enjoy His kingdom, but those who are prepared for it, by the work of love in their hearts and minds? Heaven is the kingdom of love: Divine Love warms it, forms its magnificent scenery, and blesses all its inhabitants. But none can be blessed, by the unutterable and innumerable joys of a kingdom of love, but such as are prepared for it, by the Divine Love forming them to itself, in this world. The vain would not be in happiness, where all are humble; the ambitious, where self-seeking is abhorred, as a monstrosity; the sordid and polluted would not be happy, where all are pure. But they may here become pure. The kingdom of love is prepared—they may be prepared by the truth flowing from love, which we have from the Lord Jesus. For our sakes He sanctified Himself, that we may be sanctified by the truth. Oh! let us then never hesitate to begin the work of preparation for heaven, by being heavenly. We can never enter heaven without this preparation. Even Jesus, who says "all power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth," declares, "to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give," except to those for whom it is prepared. He could give it, if any one could, but it is impossible. Love cannot enter where hate dwells, or purity where lust is nurtured.

"Glory to Jesu's sacred name,
Who all my sorrows bore;
For this great end the Saviour came,
That I might sin no more.

"Yes, God who reigns in realms of bliss,
Where angels Him adore,
Was born and glorified in this,
That I should sin no more."

When, then, the Amalekites, against whom Jehovah has war from generation to generation, with Midianites, and the sons of the east as allies, come against your harvest growing for heaven; when they would persuade you that the conquering of sin, and the growth in goodness, of real religion, are not required; blow your trumpets, and break your pitchers. Let the trumpet of divine

truth be loudly and clearly heard ; let the light of the Spirit of the Word be clearly seen. No happiness can be had on earth, but in proportion as self and sin are subdued. No religion that takes our attention from that great work, either to ceremonies or modes of mere belief, can have any value in the sight of God, or of good men. The Lord has done every thing for us that boundless love and wisdom could do. But to be angelic men, we must now co-operate with the Lord, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We are unhappy now in proportion as we are in evil, and so it will be in eternity. Let us shun sorrow by shunning sin, and faithfully cultivating all the virtues which flow from justice, mercy, charity, and piety. Let us pray constantly and earnestly to the Lord Jesus Christ for daily power to do this, and we shall become more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. Never allow any persuasions to have the least influence with you, which under pretence of honouring God, would make you less observant of His laws ; but overturn all such destructive fallacies as keep you from the life which alone leads to happiness, here, and hereafter. Struggle in the power of the living Saviour, against inbred sin and all its seductive suggestions, and when pretended forms, with an inward evil, would lead you to suppose that a barren religion will suffice to secure your everlasting peace, like Gideon's victorious three hundred men, who took of the water, putting their hand to their mouth, do you, with holy zeal, blow the trumpets in your right hand, break your pitchers, and shew the light in your left, and depend upon the assured strength of the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.

" Above all things
 Be spiritual ; what thou hast to do,
 Do as before thy God, th' all-seeing One,
 Lest thou become the slave of hollow shams,
 And meaningless observances ; a thing
 Less of vitality than mechanism.
 Examine if thy piety to God
 Be real, earnest, thorough ; if to man
 A sacrificing, self-denying thing.
 Let thy devotions be sincere, beware,
 Lest prayers be only words : remember, God
 Not only hears thy prayers, but answers thoughts.
 They who live prayer, best pray ; live praise,
 Best worship. With thyself be still sincere,
 If thou desirest peace or joy. Thy heart,
 Is it antagonistic to thy head ?
 Behind conviction still does duty lay ?
 Woe, woe to him who is a two-souled man,
 Heavenly on Sabbath, worldly all the week,
 An angel in God's house, a fiend at home,
 Neither at one with God nor with himself."

Are you then, my beloved hearers, thrashing wheat by the wine-press ? Are you endeavouring to distinguish between real

goodness and its coverings? Are you doing this faithfully, humbly using your clearest reason? Then persevere, the Lord is with you. Though the three foes of inward malice, false faith, and misapplied Scripture be against you, fear them not. The Lord will give you three companies of virtues to combat for you. Let these drink of the water of life freely. Let them come well equipped from the armoury of heaven. And when the struggle comes they will so blow the trumpets and break the pitchers, that all opposition will fly, and fade, like chaff before the wind. Be ye, then, faithful, valiant for truth and goodness; and you will be victors in a struggle, where the prize is everlasting bliss.

SERMON XII.

THE PARABLE OF THE TREES.

"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fairness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."—Judges ix. 8—15.

THIS divine parable is full of interest. It is the oldest complete example of a parable blending with literal history. The early chapters of Genesis are divine allegories, entirely describing the spiritual states of mankind—in form historical, but in substance entirely spiritual. But here we have, in the midst of real history, a manifest parable; both the history and the parable, however, containing in their spiritual sense, those divine thoughts which constitute the especial excellency of a revelation from God: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."—Isa. lv. 8, 9.

But this parable is highly interesting in its literal bearing. And I cannot too much impress upon my hearers the truth, that the spiritual sense of the Word is not instead of the letter, not a substitute for it, but is within it, like a soul. All that the most devoted admirer of the letter can learn from it, we also learn. Its historical facts and moral lessons we fully accept and appreciate. They are a lamp unto our feet. They shew us God in history. They disclose the final triumph of virtue, and the curse of crime in the lowest sphere of things, and prove that justice rules in this lower world eventually, as it forms the habitation of God's throne above. When we have obtained from the literal sense all that any one else can obtain, and in many respects even

more ; for the spiritual sense gives us often a clue to decide on points in the letter, otherwise dark and doubtful ; then we can rise by the wonderful law of correspondencies into the inner garden of heavenly wisdom. The divine parable before us will illustrate all these important points of view.

It was spoken by Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, to expose the unworthy conduct of the Israelites, and to arrest them in their course. His father had won the gratitude and admiration of his countrymen. He had delivered them from famine and from slavery. They had seen that God was with him. His efforts were crowned with complete success. And if we strive to realize the picture of a land down-trodden and crushed by a combination of enemies, before whose united strength resistance seems hopeless—pining in misery, a prey to insult and degradation—its altars and homes desecrated, and its fields wasted ; and then see these foes vanquished and broken, flying before the defenders of their land, their liberty, and their laws, we may have some conception of the joyful acclamations with which he would be hailed when returning from victory. The air would be filled with his name. The men would exultingly point to their chief. The women would bring their children out to feast their eyes on their deliverer, and to lip his praises. Such was Gideon to his countrymen. He was their hero. He was their temporal saviour. They offered to make him their king, and to fix the succession to his children. But Gideon was a truly great man. He desired that his country should be free, ruled only by God. He returned his countrymen this answer, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you : the Lord shall rule over you."—Judges viii. 22. Oh ! that this feeling were universal ; that none desired to rule, but all to serve. The love of serving is the spirit of heaven : "Are they not all ministering spirits." It is the spirit of the Lord Jesus. "I am amongst you as He that serveth." It is the spirit of happiness and peace. Where all serve, all are happy. In this spirit, therefore, Gideon replied, and his words are deserving of letters of gold, or to be written still more nobly—engraven upon all hearts—"I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you : the Lord shall rule over you."

During the forty years of Gideon's after life, Israel dwelt in peace : he guiding his countrymen as a valued counsellor and judge. The land smiled in plenty. After his death, however, a son of his, by a concubine, moved by low ambition, induced the Israelites to conspire with him to have him for their king, and in carrying out this conspiracy, he slew all the sons of his father

born in marriage, except one, the youngest, Jotham, who escaped; and from the top of an eminence, while his enemies were at bay, he uttered this parable to exhibit their ingratitude, and to warn them of its fatal end. The olive, the vine, and the fig-tree, in the metaphorical application, would be his father, his brethren, and himself, none of whom would be king. The bramble would be Abimelech, who would either reign or destroy, and who would in the end, as the parable teaches, introduce so wretched a system, as to entail upon himself and people mutual destruction. And so it happened. And such is the eternal law. Evil slays the wicked. The empire founded upon treachery and murder, is rotten at its core. He whose throne is reached through falsehood and blood, who has no foundation of virtue, and right, and worth to rest upon, must continue to cement with fresh crime the edifice he has reared, and so to add to the fire of vengeance that is secretly gathering around him, until at length some additional blow breaks the cover, under which it has been smouldering, and it bursts upon the wicked tyrant and destroys, as it was with this Abimelech, both reign and life. Then judgment is manifest, even upon the earth. Then it is visibly seen that the "Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men;" "whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride, He is able to abase."

Such is the lesson yielded by this parable in its letter, as a warning against that destructive ambition which has so often desolated the earth, in ancient and in modern times. May its voice ever be remembered by us, who though not likely to exercise that terrible principle on the stage of the wide world, where kingdoms are the stake for which men struggle, yet in the narrower sphere of a society, or in our homes, may cherish a similar disposition, and bury ourselves in an equal ruin. May it be our nobler portion humbly to work out the designs of love: to help, to succour, and to serve; to subdue self, and to promote peaceful improvement: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Before quitting this part of the subject, allow me to call your attention to the difference between metaphor and correspondence, which are sometimes not clearly distinguished from one another. Metaphor is a certain likeness which is perceived by the mind, between two natural things which have in other respects no connection with one another. Correspondence is the analogy which exists between two things, one spiritual and the other natural, and which answer to one another in all their uses and in all respects. We might go further, and attempt to shew that in all

cases of true and complete correspondences, the spiritual is to the natural as the cause to the effect, the soul to the body ; but upon this we cannot now enlarge. We have dwelt upon the parable as a metaphor. The olive tree stands in this respect for Gideon. Like him, it was most valuable and honoured, and like him, it would not reign. In other respects there was no connection or relation between them, and both were natural visible objects. We come now to the spiritual sense of the parable, and to bring this out we must employ, not metaphor but, CORRESPONDENCE.

PERCEPTIONS, or acknowledged principles of truth or error, grow up in the mind like trees in the soil, and answer to trees in all their progress. Instruction is like seed. Instruction in divine things is the seed of all that is great and good in the soul. "The seed," the Divine Saviour said, "is the Word of God."—Luke viii. 11. If we watch the reception and growth of knowledge in the mind, until it becomes a clear and enlarged view, and at length a productive principle, we shall discern the closest analogy to the progression of a tree from seed to fruit. Let us take for our example a good tree, which will of course correspond to a good principle. There is first the seed taken from the great storehouse or granary of heaven—the sacred Scriptures. But this will only grow in suitable soil. The good ground, said the Lord, is an honest and good heart. If it be received into this ground, and cherished by the warmth of that early innocence, and those soft impressions for good, which the Lord deposits in every infant soul, it will soon shew signs of life. The germs will be signs of those trees of righteousness of which the prophet speaks : "the branches of the planting of Jehovah."—Isa. lxii. 2. But heat and light must descend from the sun upon trees to make them grow ; and love must warm, and wisdom must illuminate, the mind ; both coming from the sun of righteousness ; or its trees will make no progress. And this is done when the heart opens itself, in private or public devotion, and we lie in the sun-light of heaven. Rain, too, is wanted to refresh and invigorate earth's plants from time to time, and so is it with the plants of heaven : "My doctrine shall drop as the rain," said Moses, "it shall distil as the dew ; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."—Deut. xxxii. 2.

When these conditions are attended to, a growth of principle takes place, in complete correspondence with the growth of trees. First are seen young thoughts, like leaves, induced by the literal sense of the Word. We think of the historical incidents recorded there, and how we should have acted had we taken

part in them, and draw conclusions of comfort, direction, and instruction, which evince both life and progress. Next, come those more beautiful reflections, which arise when we perceive the everlasting side of things, and are the product of the spiritual sense of the Word: when the earthly Canaan is acknowledged as the mirror of the heavenly one, and we ourselves Israelites, seeking states of purity and peace, such as reign in the homes of the blessed. These higher thoughts are the blossoms of the trees of the soul. And when these contemplations are followed by the actual virtues of a Christian life—when the justice which seeks to honour every claim of right—the charity which feels and acts for the good of others, even beyond the rigid line of law—when the piety which delights in adoring the Giver of all good are beheld in the daily walk in life, at home, in business, and at church, then we can appreciate the divine words, “a good tree bringeth forth good fruit.”

It is true, all persons who receive the seed of heavenly things, do not bring them forth to perfection. Some produce leaves, and there stop; these are they who learn and think about the natural meaning of the Scriptures and go no farther. Others produce blossoms, and appear beautiful for a time, but no fruit follows. These are they who meditate and speak of heavenly things, are at times even eloquent in their praise of them: but they are different from those wise ancients who said, “We do not speak great things, we do them; they speak great things, but will not do them.” Even the differences in the quality of fruit have also their correspondence. Some persons, in the good they do, are not sufficiently humble and pure-minded; these are like those trees whose fruits are wanting in that rich, luscious, and delightful flavour which constitutes the perfection of fruit. While there are others who bring forth their fruit in due season, in due quantity, and of the most agreeable quality. Such are they who are ever ready at the calls of duty and of mercy; orderly, kind, upright, and good; and in every good they are enabled to perform, delight to acknowledge the whole power to have come from that great Saviour who said, “I am the vine, ye are the branches; without me ye can do nothing.”

Such is the correspondence of trees. And it is from this correspondence we find them continually used in the sacred Scriptures in a spiritual manner. “The trees of the Lord,” said the Psalmist, “are full of sap.”—Psalm civ. 16. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth

fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him."—Psalm xcii. 12—15. Nothing can be more beautiful, or more instructive, than such a lesson seen in the light of correspondences. The fruitful palm, and the majestic cedar, are the principles which involve love to the Lord, and an enlightened faith in Him. These are planted in the house of the Lord when they are grounded in the regenerate heart, where the Divine Love delights to dwell. When they are rooted in the affections, they still for ever expand in increasing wisdom and intelligence—they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they will still be ever young from their immortal character. They will be fat and green; or, in other words, they will confer the richest blessings within the soul, and the freshest truths to illustrate the onward march of life, and to shew the ever springing abundance of the eternal source of every excellence. The trees of which the prophet speaks, when describing the full blessing of the redeemed, can be no other than the exalted perceptions of the soul rejoicing in the glorious goodness which has accomplished its full salvation. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."—Isa. lv. 12, 13.

Regarded in their spiritual character, trees form a profitable theme for devout meditation at all times, especially in spring, when all nature is full of promise.

"Think, think, O my soul, what a lesson for thee,
The bough may bloom fair, yet quite barren the tree,
While planted I am in this garden below,
Some fruit, if but little, some fruit I must shew,
Lest He that hath planted should say with a frown,
The axe to the root, cut the lumberer down.
My season for bearing, not long can it last,
And I know not how nearly that season is past:
Let it pass; earth is not my favourite clime,
Nor skilful the hand of the gardener, Time;
Heaven, heaven is the clime, and once plant me but there,
O how shall I bloom, and what fruit shall I bear:
In the Planter's own garden, beneath His own eye,
My leaf shall not wither, my fruit shall not die,
By the fountain of life I shall flourishing stand,
Transplanted by love, with the gentlest hand."

In our text, however, we have not only the subject of trees in general placed before us, but three trees especially are singled out, as valuable, but declining to reign,—the olive, the fig-tree,

and the vine; and one as worthless determined to rule or to destroy,—the bramble. Let us examine these singly; and first, the olive. It is the tree most esteemed in eastern countries, and especially in Palestine. Its wood yields a precious gum, its fruits are delightful and nutritious, and its oil, which is as it were the essence of the fruit pressed out, is used in food, also to give light, and as holy oil in the offerings of worship. When Canaan was described as to its richest blessings by Moses, it was called a land of oil-olive and honey (Deut. vi. 11). Its admirable character is expressed also in our text: "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" Or as it should be rendered, Should I leave my fatness, which God and man honour in me.

The oil of the tree, which was used in the sanctuary, both with the offering and for the holy light, is said therefore to be honoured by God; and from its uses, and its eminent value for food and healing purposes, is also said to be honoured by men.

As trees correspond to truths perceived as principles in the mind, the most worthy tree will correspond to the most valuable principle, that is the wisdom which teaches love to the Lord. This principle when it has grown up in the soul, and given us to know the true character of our Heavenly Father,—shewn us that He is not only loving, but love itself, infinite love, unutterably tender, unchangeably merciful, good to all, whose tender mercies are over all His works. This is the celestial olive-tree which yields the oil, honoured both by God and man. How soothing is the gentle influence which flows down into the soul of him who has come to a full perception of the love of God. It generates the divine likeness in him. He loves God who is love itself, and that love fills him with a tender regard for his brother, the child of God. The love of God and the love of our neighbour, or rather strictly speaking, the wisdom conjoined with these two principles, are called the two olive-trees, which stand before the Lord of the whole earth (Zec. iv. 11—14). He who is in the two grand principles of love to God and charity to man, dwelleth in God and God in him. He is ever interiorly in the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The two olive-trees are called "two witnesses" in the Book of Revelation xi. 4; and they are indeed the best witnesses for God in the human soul. They give us to know the spirit of heaven; they testify of the tenderness, the sweetness, the pity, the joy, and the blessedness of the love of God, by the qualities they diffuse through us. The leaf even of the olive became the emblem of peace among all the nations, and the oil, of the holy influence of love, diffusing softness and

joy into our whole being. How much we need this holy oil! Our selfishness by nature makes us hard, cold, severe, and sometimes bitter and cruel. But, when the oil of heavenly love descends from the interiors of the soul, and infuses itself into every affection and thought, it gives a softness, and at the same time, interior joy and peace, which to others is unknown. The Psalmist said, "Thou hast anointed my head with oil: my cup runneth over;" and the prophet speaking of the same holy principle being imparted to the regenerate Christian, describes it as the "oil of joy for mourning" (Isa. lxi. 3).

Without this oil of love there cannot long be the light of faith; hence, in the Gospel, "The five foolish virgins who took no oil in their vessels," are represented as rising from their slumbers and carelessness, and running to the wise with the despairing cry, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out" (Matt. xxv. 8).

It is of the olive-tree corresponding to the interior wisdom which conjoins the soul and its God together, and through which holy love descends, that we are informed in our text it refused to be king over the trees. The Divine Word teaches us by this, that the spirit of rule is opposed to the spirit of love. Love desires to aid, to serve, to bless, but not to rule. If placed in positions of government and responsibility, it accepts them that it may minister, not that it may reign. If it were to enter into the desire of ruling, it would lose its fatness, or in other words, its richness and its joy. In the lower world, all strive to rule, and all are wretched; in the heavenly world all strive to serve, and all are happy. God honours the disinterested love of serving; it is like his own. When he came into the world, He came to be the servant of all. He ministers to the whole universe, and ministers unseen. He ministers to the worm and to the feeblest thing that lives. They cannot know the author of their bliss, but He blesses them; they all wait upon Him, and He gives them their meat in due season. He opens His hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. He blesses them unseen and unknown. Such is the Divine Love, such is heavenly love from Him. It is innocent as a little child—it will not think of ruling, but rejoices in the blessedness of serving; and God honours it, and men honour it, while they behold it ever striving to serve, and ever striving to be lowly. O may this spirit be ours, my beloved hearers, so may we in truth take up the words of the Psalmist, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God, for ever and ever."—Ps. lii. 8.

The fig-tree is next brought under notice, and is often intro-

duced in the sacred volume. It was one of the most common fruit trees in Palestine, growing often on the way-side. It corresponds therefore to that natural perception which teaches the ordinary virtues of daily life. The Word, as it was known in the letter by the Jews, was a fig-tree. You will recollect the incident recorded of the Lord, on His visit to Jerusalem. He saw a fig-tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, "Let no fruit grow on thee, henceforward, for ever."

This seems very strange conduct of the Saviour, especially as we are told in Mark that the time of figs was not, unless we bear in mind the correspondence of the fig-tree, and likewise the fact that fruit comes on this tree BEFORE THE LEAF. Hence, if it were in full leaf, and there was no fruit, it was clear there would be none. The truth that teaches obedience is the lowest essential truth of the Church. And we ought to practice obedience first from regard to our parents, and by command of the Lord; afterwards we shall be able to see and state the reasons for it. The fruit first, the leaf after. The Jewish Church at its end was all leaf, and no fruit; all profession, and no practice: and hence it was that the time had come for the church to be removed from them, and given to a better people. The Lord said to Nathaniel, "When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee;" language which intimates that Nathaniel was not only one who had a fig-tree, but who made the truth, meant by the fig-tree, their ruling principle: they were under it. The Lord always calls such to be the commencement of a new Church. They are Israelites indeed.

But even the common virtues of life, to be genuine, must be separated from the love of dominion. It is not always so. But unless this be really the case, there is no sweetness in doing good. Our good in fact is not good, but self in a disguise. A person will sometimes be liberal in his support of charities. He will profess the utmost sympathy for the poor. He will be generous in his support of public institutions for education and general improvement. His fig tree seems to bear fine fruit, and yet it is quite possible that the love of applause, the desire to be paid by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, being given to confer upon him political power, may be his aim. And if so, his figs have no sweetness, and are not good fruit. And, oh, what is the applause of men compared with the sweetness of heaven! What are fruits worth if they are only gilded dust! The apostle says truly, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it

profiteth nothing.”—1 Cor. xiii. 3. Oh certainly it profiteth nothing! What profiteth the noise of a mob, the hollow applause of the vain and self-seeking, who will cry hosanna to-day, and crucify Him to-morrow, when there is not the sweetness of the approval of conscience and of heaven in it? Our figs, in such case, are like those bad figs the prophet saw in vision,—“Evil figs which cannot be eaten, they are so evil.”—Jer. xxiv. 8. Such then is the lesson conveyed in the reply of the fig-tree spiritually understood. Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit to go and be promoted over the trees? And when we are ever tempted, my beloved hearers, to make the virtues of outward life a mere stepping stone to power, may our reply be ever the same. Should we leave the sweetness of heavenly virtue, and the real goodness of works which will abide the scrutiny of eternity, for the empty pageantry of place and power, sought only from the love of rule, and entailing bitterness here, and misery hereafter.

“Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. Vines correspond to the truths of faith. The Church, especially as to its principles of faith, is commonly called in the Scriptures a vineyard. The reason is, no doubt, that the influence of principles of true faith is to the mind what wine is to the body,—it strengthens the exhausted and cheers the weary. There is a beautiful use of the vines in this respect in Isaiah: “My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.”—Isa. v. 1, 2. A little lower we are informed, “The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.”—Ver. 7. The choicest vine is that faith which joins us to the Saviour. He implants this faith in the hearts of those who seek him, and gives them power to bring forth fruit that yields new wine. His love energizes it, purifies it, and enriches it. He is the source of faith, the author and finisher of it (Heb. xii. 2). “I am the vine,” He says, “ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” The influence of faith is as wine to the soul. There are times when the spirit is faint, and weary with the toil of life. Dejection depresses the mind, and the pilgrim in the valley of gloom and care is ready to sink; but faith comes and whispers, Courage, help is near.

The use of wine in the Sacred Word, as the corresponding image of cheering truth, is quite common in both Testaments. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea, come buy wine and milk, without money, and without price."—Isa. lv. 1. Here, undoubtedly, the truth which purifies is meant by water; that which cheers, by wine; while the simpler lessons of religion, which are adapted to babes in Christ, are signified by milk. Truths of duty and intelligence purify the life, and quench the thirst like water; but truths which speak of Divine Love, of salvation, and of heaven, refresh and elevate the soul like wine. In a prophecy of the book of Joel, respecting the time when the New Jerusalem would be the Church of mankind, there is a beautiful use of the term wine: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk."—Chap. iii. 18. That is, In that day, when knowing that God is love, that heaven is a kingdom where love reigns, and whose joys all flow from that blessed principle being wrought out in all its arrangements; when men are able with an enlightened eye to see that Divine Providence forms all its ordinations, and suffers all its permissions, from a spirit of infinite tenderness to us, to guard us as far as possible from harm, and introduce us as far as possible to happiness; the soul's inmost feelings of adoration and gratitude rise like mountains within, blessing their Creator, Redeemer, and Eternal Friend, and seeking for ever to be sunned by the light and the love of His divine countenance. From these mountains shall run down new wine. Who can despair with an infinite helper? Who can fear with angels of love around him? There are more that be with us than all that be against us: Why then should we faint or despair? A God of love has created and prepared us for our work. His creation consists of innumerable channels, through which His benevolence descends. Loving friends are around, and a heaven of love before us. All things cheer us on. The mountains run down with new wine.

The vine, in our text, speaks of its wine as cheering God and man. And when we perceive that wine is the emblem of encouraging truth, we appreciate the force of the divine words. For when man is cheered by truth, and saved, God rejoices with him. The same wine that cheers man, cheers God. The new wine, which should be put into new bottles, was the new spiritual tidings the Lord brought into the world, and which should be received into renewed minds. The new fruit of the vine which the Lord Jesus would drink in the Father's kingdom with His

disciples, is the new unfolding of the spirit of the Word in which the angels delight. This is, indeed, the wine which cheers both God and man. But the vine intimates that, if she sought to be ruler over the trees, she would leave her wine. "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" And so it is. If any one, by means of heavenly truth seeks dominion, his truth ceases to be saving. It is poison, not wine, to him. Of such it is written, "Their wine is the poison of dragons, the cruel venom of asps."—Deut. xxxii. 33. When the truth which comes to make men really free,—free from sin, free from selfishness, free from falsehood,—is perverted to seduce them to slavery, no poison can be more terrible. The fallen Church is said to make men drunk with the wine of her fornication (Rev. xvii. 2). But the real vine says, "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, to be promoted over the trees?" Oh no! This wine is heavenly nourishment. It exhilarates, strengthens, and consoles the soul, by all the glorious views of a sublime faith. A blessing is in it. By drinking again and again, our fainting powers are renewed for our labours of patience and love; and after being recreated by it in all our difficulties on earth, we shall drink it new with the angels in our Father's kingdom. What is there in ambition's empty dreams to compare with this.

"Lord, let me never turn aside,
Nor leave the path divine!
Let faith, and love, and zeal, abide;
Let patience ne'er decline.

We come now, however, to a plant of a very different character, and you will find the reply quite different.

Then said all the trees to the bramble, Come thou and reign over us. The reply takes it for granted that he is willing, and expresses his determination either to rule or destroy. This bramble is a low, bushy tree, with strong thorns, and whose wood is of a fiery nature, easily set in flames. It is the emblem of the lust of dominion, which is also essentially unbelieving. The ambitious man believes in nothing but himself and his cunning. He will patronize things sacred if they will help him to rule. He will take religion, and the loftier views of man's nature under his protection, if they will be subservient to his glorification; if not, he despises, and will do his utmost to destroy them. He is of the earth, earthy. Every thing which will contribute to his earthly aggrandizement is welcome; but he hates what will not come down to his level. Let us hear him. "If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come, and put your trust in my shadow:

and, if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

What an extraordinary invitation was that! The olive, the vine, the fig-tree, the lofty cedar and all the noble trees of the forest, were to come and put themselves under the shadow of this contemptible shrub! How ridiculous an idea! Yet it is paralleled, in all respects, by the demands of ambition. It will deign to lend its protection to divine things, only they must be subservient, and it must be chief. This principle in politicians makes religion an instrument of state policy; the ministers of religion are a superior kind of police. But woe to the religion which stoops to it. It loses its own native life and vigour: it leaves its oil, and its figs, and its wine. The principle in an ambitious priest uses all the semblances of earnest piety, to attain his selfish ends. He cares, however, nothing for them in themselves. He is an infidel at heart. He puts himself in the place of God. That which he cannot bend to his selfish rule, he burns to destroy. He says, like this miserable plant, "If not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." He burns with the mad rage of frenzy against whatever will not stoop to gratify his insane whim, to rule over all things.

Those grand old trees, the cedars of Lebanon, with their lofty summits and immense branches, correspond to the exalted rational principles, which declare man's immortality. The perceptions which soar high above the earth, which teach that human beings are not creatures of a day, but have commenced a being which will never die, these are mental cedar trees, and these are what are called upon to praise the Lord when the Psalmist exclaims, "Praise Him, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars."—Ps. cxlviii. 9.

This conviction of our immortal life, this sense of being an inhabitant of two worlds, our abode in one being only temporary, in the other for ever, is the greatest barrier against men demeaning themselves, and their religion, to the exaltation of earthly despotism. That principle would rejoice to have only tools which care for earth. The despot would, if it were possible, destroy the cedars of Lebanon. Those glorious sentiments are, however, not to be destroyed. They are immortal. The compound of low selfhood and infidelity, meant by the bramble, will destroy itself in its impurity and insanity, as Abimelech did at Thebez, but all that is orderly and divine will live on:

"Diffusing peace on all around,
And joy, and happiness, and love."

From the whole of this divine lesson, my beloved hearers,

we may gather the most invaluable impressions. We cannot too strongly imbue ourselves with the conviction that all heaven breathes humility, and every thing heavenly is humble. The moment any sacred principle is turned to a selfish purpose, it loses its richness, its sweetness, its holiness, and worth. Love becomes flattery, virtue hypocrisy, faith deception. The whole man becomes debased to earth, and worships the vilest idol known, defiled human selfhood, the very essence of all that is infernal. O let us shun this awful, desolating, soul-destroying sin. And, on the contrary, let us attend to Him who is at once the humblest and the highest. Bring often to mind the impressive and beautiful scene, when surrounded by His disciples, He took a little child, and placed it in the midst of them. It was the day following that of the grand scene of the Transfiguration.

The disciples generally had heard from Peter, James, and John, of the splendour which appeared in and around the Saviour: of His face shining like the sun, and His garments so bright as no fuller on earth could equal. They had begun to speculate upon the dignities they should fill in the earthly kingdom, now, as they thought, soon to be fully realized in super-human grandeur. The high and holy, and yet the meek and lowly, One, knew their thoughts, and when they came to Him, "Jesus called a little child unto Him, 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. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xviii. 2—4.

Let us shun, as the deadliest destroyer of our purity and peace, all the lust of dominion. Cherish the love of our brethren for the Lord's sake and for their's, and ever remember the divine words with which the Lord opened His wonderful sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 3.

The great and good Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, was once asked which was the chief virtue of the Christian religion. He answered, Humility! His questioner added, And which is the second? The bishop again replied, Humility! And which is the third, said the enquirer? And the bishop the third time said, Humility! He meant that the grace of humility in a Christian insures every other. And he was right. Man of himself is only evil. Every virtue he has is a gift from heaven. If he receives love and power to overcome his selfish dislike of others with envy, scorn, and all their horrid brood, a grateful

thankfulness is due, not a spirit of boasting. If he is proud of it, and seeks to rule by it, he has already defiled it; it has lost its fatness, it is no longer of heaven. O make me humble! should be the Christian's daily prayer. 'Tis the want of this celestial grace, which chiefly divides men, repels them from one another, each thinking himself better than the rest, and making of his gifts and graces even crimes. What have we that we have not received? The more we have, the more we owe. Let us, then, never dare to prostitute the graces which should deepen our lowliness into means to heighten our pride. An angel turns away from praises, and points upward. It is an invaluable privilege to be in the Lord's kingdom; a privilege to be enabled to do something for it. Let us enjoy our mercies, and be grateful. And for every encrease of our blessings let us say, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."—Ps. cxviii. 29.

The want of humility is the greatest barrier to our progress in truth. When self and pride are within us, we shun new truths because they are contrary to our former opinions. We are too proud to learn. Even the truth we have is not loved because it is true, but because it is our opinion; and was received at first because it was the opinion of our fathers. Such persuasions, however, are not wine; they are vinegar. The vine, with us, has left its wine, and become a worthless stock. And, except for its wine, the vine is the least valuable of trees. The Lord guides the meek in judgment. He teaches the meek His way (Psalm xxv. 9). The eye, jaundiced by prejudice, discolours all the light of heaven. Whoever will advance in the truth let him pray for a humble love of truth, because it is true. Meekness, meekness, meekness! this is the grace that keeps the channels open. And when at any time faith would whisper, that in virtue of our intelligence, our talents, or our gifts, we should aspire to be king among the trees, let our reply ever be, "We are unprofitable servants, when we have done all." "Should I leave my wine, that cheereth God and man?" Should I forsake those beautiful outpourings of heavenly wisdom, with which my cup has often run over,—those holy lessons of faith which have cheered, consoled, elevated and blessed me so often, those high and pure unfoldings from the divine vine which have blessed the angelic thirst within me, and given me a foretaste of the new wine which is drunk in my Father's kingdom? No, never, Lord! keep me like thyself, meek and lowly. Give me the grace at all times to lay up my "treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do

not break through and steal." Do thou, Divine Tree of Life, reign alone in my garden; and when my little paradise has rejoiced and bloomed, and borne ripe fruit in the sunshine of thy countenance on earth, transplant it, O Gardener Divine, to the glorious plains of thy celestial kingdom.

SERMON XIII.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE.

"And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle."—Judges xiv. 14.

"THE testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy".—Rev. xix. 10. This truth should be ever borne in mind. It gives the account of the prophets, priests and kings, of Israelitish history an interest for us of supreme worth, to consider them as shadows of the varied characters and attributes of the Saviour God.

"Kings and leaders, prophets, seers,
Penmen of the Sacred Word;
Each to Jesus witness bears,
As the only God and Lord."

Abraham, the father of the faithful, represented the Lord as the everlasting Father of all Christians; Moses typified Him as the leader of the spiritual Israel by the law of love in the New Testament; Joshua, as the conqueror of the tribes in Canaan, represented the Lord Jesus as the subduer of the inner evils of the heart; and Samson, whose strength was astonishing, and who constantly displayed it against the Philistines, was a type of that attribute of His character upon earth, in which He denounced and condemned all Pharasaic pretence and all mock religion. Regarded thus, we shall find the life of Samson more interesting to the Christian than it was to the Jew: and it will be interesting for ever.

To obtain the proper ground-work for the divine lessons connected with the history of Samson, we must remember that he was the strong opponent of the Philistines, and we must consider the character and representation of that people. They occupy a prominent position in the history of the Jewish nation. They were constantly at strife with Israel, and if Israel represented the Church of God, the enemies of Israel must represent the enemies of the Church of God: and the champion and defender

of Israel must represent the champion and defender of the Church.

First let us glance at Philistia and the Philistines. The present ordinary name for the whole country in which the Israelites dwelt, Palestine, is derived from the Philistines. They dwelt on the south side of the country, all along the Mediterranean Sea, from Joppa, now called Jaffa, to the borders of Egypt. They were a powerful people, with flourishing cities, and much commerce. The greatness of these cities was owing chiefly to the extensive trade between Europe and Asia, which was carried on mainly by them. The religion of the Philistines was very singular. They worshipped Dagon, a god, whose image had the body of a fish, with the head and hands of a man. Tradition had told them that an extraordinary being of this form had come out of the sea, and taught them the use of letters, arts, religion, law, and agriculture. The word day is the Hebrew word for fish, and the name Dagon will therefore signify the fish-god.

We have here probably all the elements for perceiving the correspondence of the Philistines, and the reason of their incessant warfare with Israel. They dwelt in the land of Canaan, were immediate neighbours of the Israelites, yet did not worship the same God. They hated Jehovah, and worshipped the fish-deity. They were powerful by their traffic on the sea, and they despised the more peaceful cultivation to which the sons of Israel were confined.

To be Philistines, and yet to dwell in the same land as Israel, is spiritually to be acquainted with the doctrines and knowledge of religion, to have the Word, and thus externally to be with the church. But not to worship and obey the Lord, and instead to set up an idol of our own, means in spiritual language to refuse the heart, and internally to worship an intellectual idol. The sea, or mass of waters, is the symbol of truth in general; of knowledge in the mass. Fish correspond to those who have a scientific turn of mind, who delight in exploring the domains of knowledge, the waters of truth; but merely from the love of knowing. To dwell on the sea-coast, spiritually means to abide in a state of knowing merely without applying that knowledge to the cultivation of the heart and life. Some people are ever at the sea-side, ever gazing on the waters, and curiously investigating their depths, but never making the efforts requisite to obtain that much higher blessing involved in those words of the Lord, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

As the correspondence of the sea will throw light upon the character of the Philistines of the present day, we will dwell a little upon the subject, and upon its use in the Word. The sea is the great highway of nations, and it is the grand reservoir of all our supplies of water, for the varied purposes of life and fertility. The whole mass of the accumulated knowledge of all ages is like the great sea, by means of which we mentally communicate with our fellows, and from which we each extract so much truth as is needful for our spiritual thirst and spiritual growth. The earth is said to be founded upon the seas, and established upon the floods (Ps. xxiv. 2). Not because the outer world is so founded, but because the Church is erected upon the knowledge which is stored in the memory, and which forms the outer ground-work of all our progress. In Isaiah it is expressly said, The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (xi. 9).

This correspondence of knowledge, in its mass, to the sea, is the key to many edifying lessons in the Scriptures, as well as to many instructive meditations, while we survey the mighty movements of the deep. Let the seas praise Him (Ps. lxix. 34), is not an unmeaning expression, but intimates that all knowledge should be used for the glory of God, and the well-being of man. The sea in a storm is like the mind lashed by passion into terrible vigour and energy, and using all it knows to dash itself against all opposers and overwhelm them with its billows. "The wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."—Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

When we witness the tempestuous ocean, lashing itself into foam under the wild howl of the furious storm, while the opposing waves dash frantically against each other, and then resume their mad impetuosity, like an army of furies, we have a terrible illustration of the mind in an uproar and rushing madly on. Mental storms exist when the soul is assailed by many such. These are the waters of which it is said, "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in upon my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me."—Ps. lxix. 1, 2, 14, 15.

Knowledges misapplied, tossed about by wild phrensy, make false principles, terrible in proportion to the energy with which

they are enforced; and when secretly impelled from the powers of darkness, making a storm which can be hushed only by the voice of Him who, on the Sea of Galilee, said to the awful billows which threatened the little bark of the disciples with ruin, "Peace, be still:" and there was a calm.

"When billows swell, and winds are high,
And clouds o'ercast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to thee I'll call,
And make thy name of love my all.

"Then, Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guide and guard me through the storm;
Defend me from each threat'ning ill,
Control the waves! say, 'Peace, be still.'"

The sea in a calm state is an emblem of the mind stored with knowledge, ruled by order, and enjoying peace. It is a grand sight to behold on a sunny day. Its surface, like an immeasurable mirror reflecting the sun, the bright and gorgeous clouds, and the calm blue depths of the sky. An invisible power moves the immense field of silvery waves with gentle regular swell, but it obeys no other force. Such is the well-stored good man's mind. It reflects the beauty of the Almighty and of heaven. It enjoys an unutterable calm, and moves only to the dictates of the inward law of love. Such are the minds of angels. Hence the Apostle John says, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."—Rev. xv. 2.

Happy is the man whose stores of knowledge are transparent: who sees in all things earthly something heavenly: whose memory, filled with information from the Divine Word, perceives spiritual light and loveliness shining through it. He stands on the sea of glass. And if his soul is tuned as it ought to be, by love to praise, he will truly have a harp of God.

The sea, then, in its various moods, corresponds to knowledges accumulated in the mind, sometimes agitated by passion, at others ruled by peace. The fishes which swim in these waters are the definite scientific principles with which we penetrate the domains of knowledge and enjoy them. Clear scientific conceptions of religion are the fish of the waters of the sanctuary. And when we enjoy our researches into divine knowledge, when we have a living earnestness in it, coming again and again to the waters of divine truth, and delighting in them, our fish will multiply. "Every thing that liveth and moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very

great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither : for they shall be healed ; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."—Ezek. xlvi. 9. To have even his scientific thoughts made alive by the waters of the Gospel is the privilege of the true Christian. May it be ours.

The Philistines dwelt constantly by the sea, and they made a fish-god. They were opposed to Israel, and strove from time to time to injure them. And are there not Philistines now? Are there not multitudes who are nominally in the Church, but who are strangers to its inner spirit? They busy themselves with the knowledge and science of religion, but never with its humility, its sacrifice of self, its love of goodness, purity and virtue. Such persons cannot unite with others if there is any difference of opinion. They live upon hair splitting. They will sacrifice all the sweetness of heavenly love, and all the uses of life, to convict any one of a mistake in doctrine or in science. The science of religion is their god, and they form themselves into its image. They have a fish-god, and they become fish-men. They will fight for an idea, or a creed, until all charity and good-will towards others are completely sacrificed, and they breathe only persecution, revenge, and war. These are Philistines at the present day. They dwell only at the sea-side of knowledge, and worship a fish. They become themselves, at last, like a creed embodied, ready to do battle with all who do not bow down to their idol. Religion to them is a war-cry. They seek not to agree with others, but are diligent to discover a disagreement, that they may at once proceed to shew their prowess, and defeat the unorthodox professor who has not been measured at their standard. These are the bitter adherents of faith only : the Philistines of modern Christendom. No matter that a Christian may worship Christ supremely ; may forego his own will to Christ's love ; may strive to subdue his entire soul and life to the power and law of Christ, is he of the settled way of thinking with reference to some creed, or even crotchet which they have determined to be indispensable to salvation? if not, down with him ; no quarter for him ; no association with him : perpetual war. It is in this state of mind that sects and divisions originate. True religion is a law of love and life, and faith is only saving so far as it leads to amendment and sanctification of heart, and purity of conduct. But the Philistines deny this. They declare that unless a person takes their particular dogma, or interpretation, there is not the slightest hope of salvation for him. Speak to them of loving God above all things, and they immediately suspect you are unsound ; but if you proceed to

intimate that our blessed Lord declared that "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. vii. 12), they at once exclaim, it is "meriting heaven by good works," and that is complete blasphemy. Believe or perish is their one note. And, not believe in loving God above all things, and shewing we believe it, by keeping His commandments, as St. John says (v. 2), not believe in loving our neighbour as ourselves, and shewing we believe that by working him no harm, but doing him all the good we can, for love worketh no ill to his neighbour, but love fulfilleth the law (Rom. xiii. 10): not in believing anything of this does faith consist, but in believing some fancies of theirs about Adam's sin being imputed to us, and all mankind being condemned in Adam, and Christ's righteousness being imputed to us the moment we believe it, and God accounting us white as snow, because Christ's purity is reckoned to our credit; these things, say they, make saving faith which gives everlasting life in a moment. The belief in these things will save you, making you acceptable to God. It will create in you love to God, good works, grace, and every blessing. Such are the principles of the Philistines of the spirit, and wild waste indeed has been made by them in the Church of God. There is a plausibility to the natural man who holds back from the real work of the regenerate life, who clings to his inward evils, and wishes to gain heaven at the least possible expense, which makes the Philistines a worse than common foe. There is a power of bending the Scriptures to seem to favour this delusive dream of man being lost and saved by imputation, which makes the professors of it, Goliath-like, presume upon their strength, and defy the armies of the living God. Yet nothing is more baseless than their whole system. And when it rears itself, giant as it looks, to oppose the real power of real religion, one smooth stone from the brook of God's Word is competent to strike the giant to the earth. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." —John xiii. 17.

Having thus endeavoured to describe the Philistines of the present day, we will now proceed to consider Samson as its opposer. He is the type of the Lord Jesus as a practical Saviour. He came as the opponent of absolute and present sin, not to propound any strange and theoretic schemes, but to conquer hell then, to put down sin then, and to do this really and fully, and thus to be the spring of new power to all his people in the coming time; the everlasting Father of the new age.

Samson was a Nazarite from birth, not partaking of wine or

anything from the vine. He also, according to angelic direction, preserved his hair from being cut. Both these particulars indicate the practical feature in the Saviour's character. Abstinence from the vine and its product, is representative of abstinence in His practical life of all help from faith: He acted from good itself. He did good, because He loved good; not for the sake of the distant rewards which faith proposes, but for the sake of the present excellence inherent in goodness. He borrowed nothing from the vine. His uncut hair was the emblem in Samson of truth in the lowest externals of life. Truth in word and work is symbolized by hair, hence the hair of the risen Saviour is described as white like wool, as white as snow. When the prophet is derided as merely helpless and unable to be of any service, he is addressed with the opprobrious expressions, "Go up, thou bald head: go up, thou bald head." Truth to be powerful must be truth seen clearly even in the letter; not mere mental truth. And to represent this in Samson, his hair was not to be cut.

Of the fallen Jewish Church it is said, Instead of well-set hair there should be baldness, indicative of the want of external truth and truthfulness among them. The prophets wore hairy clothes as an indication of the truth which they were to utter, even to the lowest apprehensions of men. Elijah is called a hairy man (2 Kings i. 18). Esau is especially mentioned as a hairy man; and, to obtain the full benefit of his brother's birthright, Jacob covered his hands and neck so as to make them hairy. This, like the history of Abraham, was an allegory. These two men represent the two principles of the mind, the will, and the intellect. The will, slow to be regenerated, and heedless of its immortal birthright for heaven; the intellect, capable of being led by faith, winning the inheritance, and leading his external life into order from duty, until the heart, renewed, resumes its proper government at last, and Esau regains his birthright, and breaks his brother's yoke from off his neck (Gen. xxvii. 40). Samson's strength lay in his hair. The strength of truth is always in its ultimates, when seen in harmony with its spirit. When a person sees a principle interiorly, and then can impress it with a "Thus saith the Lord," he is invincible. When the true thoughts of a Christian are expressed in true and simple words, they are felt to be powerful. They are, in fact, sure to triumph in the end. Truth goes furthest. Truth lasts longest. Truth is great, and will prevail. These are proverbs furnished by the experience of mankind; and, to represent the power of truth in word and work, Samson's strength

was in his hair. The whole cunning of falsehood is applied to prevent persons seeing the truth, conscious that, if seen, it will prevail. Let it come out so as to manifest the spirit's hair, and it will certainly prevail.

Samson resolved to take a wife of the daughters of the Philistines, which much pained his father and mother, who knew not that it was of the Lord, and that an occasion was sought against the Philistines. The Son, the Divine Samson, took into His human nature the imperfections and tendencies to evil of the whole human race. "The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all."—Isa. liii. 6. The affection for a spurious religion, which is one part of the iniquity of us all, is represented by a woman of the daughters of the Philistines. How contrary to His Divine Love and Wisdom it was that He should associate Himself to our fallen states is intimated by the complaint of Samson's father and mother: "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?"—Ver. 3. But Samson persisted. He saw that the result would be the overthrow of the Philistines. The Lord condescended to clothe Himself in our unsanctified and imperfect nature, and at what an expense to His infinite purity we can but faintly conceive. "He humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven."—Psalm cxiii. 6. "The heavens are not clean in His sight."—Job xv. 15. To take, then, not our nature purified as the angels have it, but as men had it, even the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii. 16). This is persistence for the sake of love. This was condescension. To take on Him our infirmities, that He might have a feeling of our infirmities (Heb. iv. 15). To receive into His humanity our infirmities, that He might be "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."—Heb. iv. 15. To come into the region where men were, and even where infernals were, that He might triumph over the latter, and save the former: this was the wondrous mercy of the Most High in assuming our nature, and this was indicated by Samson's connections with the Philistines. What Samson did literally, of course, only occurred mentally in the temptations of the Lord.

When Samson went down to Timnath in Philistia, and came to the vineyards, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid.

Samson's going down to take his betrothed, and prepare her to become a wife, will represent the Lord's exploration of His human nature, and the preparation for its glorification and full

union with Himself. In doing this, the lion roared at Samson, to represent the opposition to the Lord's redemption of our nature and of the world, made by the powers of darkness here effigied by this lion. The lion is the symbol of courage—the courage of those who are bold for the truth in a good sense—of those bold for falsehood, when, as here, the evil are described. In saving men, the Lord had first to put down the power of infernal spirits. The lion roared on Samson when he was at the vineyards, and before he got to the house of the woman he desired. So was it with the Lord. Before He could begin to save men from their sins, it was essential that He should overthrow that terrible power, which held them inwardly in bondage. This is the lion prefigured in the one before us, and referred to in many more places in the sacred Scriptures. Peter says, "Your adversary, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."—1 Peter v. 8. By the devil is not meant any one great evil spirit, but the concentrated force of a multitude is personified and represented in one. Jesus said to the evil power infesting the poor man among the tombs, "What is THY name? And he answered, saying, My name is legion: for we are many."—Mark v. 9.

In the Book of Psalms, where the Lord is represented by David, and His sorrows and struggles with the powers of evil are often portrayed in a most vivid and touching manner, the lion is often referred to as the type of the infernal powers. In the Twenty-second Psalm, which is applied to the Lord's sufferings by His own use of the commencing words on the cross, it is said, "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion."—Ver. 13. "Save me from the lion's mouth, for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns."—Ver. 21. "My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire; the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."—Psalm lvii. 4. "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under foot."—Psalm xci. 13. In these, and many more passages, it is evident that by lion and young lion are meant those terrible powers from which the Lord came to redeem man, and with whom He fought. They assailed Him. The young lion roared. But not now having a feeble man to contend with, but a Divine man, the power which overthrew the hells is represented by Samson's tearing the lion as he would a kid. The omnipotence wielded by the Lord Jesus effected the overthrow of the infernal Societies in the world of spirits, and which held the minds of men in bondage. Thus

was the lion slain. This work of conquering hell in the invisible world is often passed by unnoticed by those who read the Psalms and the Gospels, where they are frequently adverted to, and strikingly announced, because there is now but little known of the world of spirits and its close connection with this. Yet the Lord is there manifestly described as effecting a judgment of the world at the time when He was among men. There is a striking instance in Luke: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan like lightning fall from heaven. Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."—Chap. x. 17—19. Here manifestly the subjugation of infernal spirits is declared, and the result, to be the conveyance of new power to man on earth. All societies in this world should be regarded as associated with spirits in the world of mind, with such as are mentally nearest like themselves. And when the world has been long pursuing a certain system or dispensation, those who quit this world with that system interwoven with all their affections, sentiments, and habits, they go to strengthen the sphere and the power of such as favour that system; and hence its influence in this world on the minds of men becomes more rooted and rivetted, and so it continues until the Lord judges it, and thus provides for a change. This condition of the spirit-world, as a leading element in the condition of this, is commonly overlooked; yet in the economy and arrangements of the Divine government it cannot be, and is not, overlooked. All the great movements of the outer world have their roots in the inner one; and the only way to improve society on earth is, first, to clear the spirit-world of those from whom old and corrupt influences have come. When the Lord was upon earth, He announced, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 31, 32. Men could not be drawn to the Lord, so long as an awful inner world of corrupt spirits, the accumulations of ages were interposed as ruling influencing powers between mankind and Himself. When the prince of this world was cast out, then men could really in spirit be drawn to their Lord. To put down the powers of darkness, then, was to lay the axe to the root of the upas-tree of falsehood and sin, and the branches would wither and die, making room for the mustard seed of true religion to be sown, which would in its turn become a great tree, and protect all who seek to grow in the

love of God and one another. This meeting of the powers of good and evil in the spirit-world, and, at the end of an age or dispensation, the descent of the Lord into *that world* to judgment, should ever be borne in mind by every one who will understand those cycles in which the great progressions of society move. For hundreds of years mankind go on in the same beaten track, only deepening and widening the extent. No effort to change the march of events does anything but crush the daring protester against, it may be, most preposterous popular superstitions. He testifies against the Juggernaut of the age, but he sinks beneath its wheel. The time for judgment and changes has not come. At length there is a consummation of folly and iniquity brought about. A false system has fully worked itself out. There is a ripening in rottenness. A prophet comes and speaks heroic soul-elevating truths. Men feel their souls at the same time unwontedly free and buoyant. They loathe the old tyranny. They feel the light and the new air of heaven playing around their souls, and they gather round the new standard. A new dispensation has begun. Such is the ground work and rationale of all those epidemic movements by which the face of society is changed. A judgment and clearance are effected in the mind-world, and the result of the spiritual heavy clouds being dispersed is the freshness, the light, and the beauty, of a mental spring for the world. All thoughtful persons look for judgment at the end of a dispensation of things, but they look for it to happen in the wrong world. It is appointed for men once to die, and *after death* the judgment. All great judgments upon ages, like individual judgments upon persons, take place after death. Unless the corrupt adherents of an old dead age are removed from the world, where they can still influence this, and bar the road to progress, no new start can be made. They are sensible of this. They resist their removal. They war against the Divine Samson, but in vain. He tears them as if they were a kid, though there is nothing in His hand. Divine omnipotence, acting through the humanity of the great Saviour, broke down the power of the infernals, and thus effected the deliverance of the human race. Expressed in the language of the prophet, "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness it sustained Him."—Isa. lix. 16. No power but that of God Himself could have effected man's redemption; but His love is as great as His power, and therefore He became our Saviour. "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them

in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."—Isa. lxiii. 3. The lion roared at Samson when he was at the vineyards. The Lord is said to have trodden the winepress alone. The vineyards signify the Church. There, spiritually either the good or the bad vines grow. When society has gone wrong, it is the Church which has first gone wrong.

"When nations are to perish in their sins,
 'Tis in the Church the leprosy begins :
 The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
 To watch the fountain and to keep it clear,
 Carelessly nods, and sleeps upon the brink,
 While others poison what the flock should drink ;
 Or waking at the call of lust alone,
 Infuses lies and errors of his own :
 His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
 And, tainted by the very means of cure,
 Catch from each other a contagious spot,
 The foul forerunner of a general rot."

Every judgment, therefore, begins at the church. The spirits connected with a false church, are the lion which roars, at the vineyards. The Divine Redeemer and Judge explores the inward motive of all opposers. He brings the most secret disposition to light. This is called treading the winepress. By this means as the juice is separated from the husk, so is the inward essence of the soul separated from its outward seeming. The books of men's souls are opened. The self-seeker, the power-seeker, are unmasked, and multitudes who have kept up a semblance of piety are unveiled, and shewn in the light of heaven to be only fit for the abodes of the perseveringly wicked. In the world of spirits are gathered multitudes of covered hypocrites who, when unveiled, are shewn to be monsters of iniquity; there are also great numbers who have been deluded by such sanctimonious impostors, who cannot be entirely freed from their influence after death, until the time of judgment and exposure comes. These are inwardly good persons, who have been taught the general prevalent errors, and have regulated their lives and motives even by them. They are watched over, and cared for by the Lord, but cannot be fully delivered until the time of judgment. These were they whom Peter says the Lord visited when he was dead as to the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah (1 Pet. iii. 18—20). These were the captivity whom the Lord led captive when the everlasting doors were opened to receive him (Eph. iv. 8). These were the prey which were taken from the mighty, the lawful captives

which were delivered, when Jehovah became our Saviour and Redeemer (Isa. xlix. 24, 25). They were taken, as it were, from the very jaws of the lion, and saved with an everlasting salvation. Although these truths were well known in the early days of Christianity, they have become almost forgotten amongst so-called Christians at the present day, who suppose that the whole of redemption consisted in the death of the Lord, to satisfy the demands of another Divine Being. They know scarcely anything of His struggle with and overthrow of infernal spirits, and the deliverance of myriads of the good who had been held in bondage. They know little, indeed, of His destroying, by His death, him that had the power of death, even the devil (Heb. ii. 14): of His being manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8). The victories which made heaven ring again with holy and triumphant exultation are almost ignored among men, because the Church has so sunk into ignorance of spiritual things and the spiritual world, that the Scriptures on such subjects have become unintelligible. Let them, however, be faithfully consulted, and we shall then learn that redemption was not effected by the pain inflicted on one divine person, to appease the wrath or justice of another, but that it was the work of the one Divine Person, besides whom there is no other to bring the universe once more into order, by vanquishing the powers of hell, in both the invisible and the visible worlds. And He did it. And the heavens rejoiced over it. Their glorious companies were increased by countless multitudes. Hence it is written, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."—Isaiah xlv. 22, 23.

In its most extensive signification, we can now see what is involved in this Divine Riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."—Judges xiv. 14. For the eater or devourer is a most appropriate term to express the terrible character of those infernals who, being full of self-love, seek only to devour, or to reduce to their own selfish ends, the property, the power, and the comforts of all others. They are strong from the false principles with which they envelop themselves. But where the devourers and the strong had reigned and reigned, there the Lord had triumphed, and constituted His new heaven of redeemed ones. Their joys are signi-

fied by the honey, formed in the carcase of the dead lion. Samson partook of this honey to intimate that the Lord rejoices with His people. It is meat and drink to Him when man is happy. It was to represent the divine sympathy and joy with His people after redemption, that He said, on His appearance to His disciples, when they were fishing, after His resurrection, "Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honeycomb, and he did eat before them."—Luke xxiv. 41—43. The broiled fish and honeycomb were not only real but symbolic. They signified the true thoughts and sweet delights which His people could now enjoy; and His Divine joy with them and in them. What is meat to them is meat to Him. His joy is in them, and their joy is full. When the lion was slain, a swarm of bees formed in his carcase, and Samson ate of the honey, and gave his father and his mother some. When hell was conquered, and the redeemed were constituted into a new heaven, like a swarm of happy bees ministering to each other's happiness, the Lord rejoiced with them; His Divine love, His Father, was satisfied, and heaven and the Church as a grand mother rejoiced also. He ate, and gave His Father and His Mother some.

But let us now make a more individual application of this Divine Riddle. Every man must follow the Lord in the regeneration, or he cannot enter into His joys. No cross, no crown; no labour, no triumph; is the law both of nature and of grace. We become strong not from our own strength, but as the Apostle said, I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. Though ourselves the veriest weakness, through the Saviour's help we become real Samsons, "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—2 Cor. x. 4, 5. But this power is given from the Lord in proportion as we are thoroughly dedicated to God, and thoroughly trained to be virtuous and truthful in all our matters. Our inward convictions should be suffered to come out in words and works. We should let our spiritual hair grow. Or in other words, not shape our outer life to the passing fashions of a hypocritical world, but speak the truth and do the truth.

Let us heed no reasonings that would slacken our efforts for self-conquest—for imitation of our Saviour—for devotion to His laws. By His might we shall conquer, and we shall enter into His joy. The lion roars. God's law is a terrible thing. It is a flood to drown you. It is a park of artillery, every gun

double-shotted. It is a fire to destroy you. It is a judge to condemn you. It is awful to think of the law. But the Samson-like soul looks up at this wild rage, at the merciful rules of the God of love, and hears, as if from a seraph's silver voice, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."—Psalm xix. 7—10. The young soul gathers courage; he determines to gird himself for the holy war with what is evil in him, to follow the Lord Jesus his Saviour, to live the life of heaven upon earth, to be a real Christian, and to begin by putting down in himself, all the opposing reasonings against the law of love and mercy, and the evil in which they originate. He sees it now as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places." His salvation depends upon crushing him. He looks to his Divine Saviour and prays: "Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, thy sword"—Psalm xvii. 12, 13. He sets his love upon the Lord, and he treads upon the lion and the adder in his soul, and goes on his way rejoicing.

Now it is that, having resisted and conquered evil, he begins to feel the sweets of heavenly goodness. In grace, as in nature, there is no vacuum. When darkness is expelled, light enters; when evil with its misery is overcome, goodness with its joy is present; when hell with its attendant demons is driven from us, heaven with its angels encompasses us with songs of deliverance. The joy of conquered sin, the feeling that we have begun to live for heaven, and have already conquered many obstacles, is beyond all description. It is the hidden manna which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. Man eats angel's food. The meat of heavenly goodness is partaken of, the sweetness of heavenly truth is experienced. We rejoice in ourselves, we rejoice with the Lord, we rejoice with the Church in heaven and on earth. We eat the honey, and give our Father and our Mother some. Our life is gilded with a new glory, never felt before. The world seems radiating with heaven. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. All our thoughts, like busy bees, are full of projects for the good of all around us, and each one brings its sweetness, each makes its honey.

We find that in doing the commandments there is great reward. Great peace have they that love thy law. Conquered evil has given us meat: conquered falsehood has given us sweetness.

Oh, if men would only learn the blessedness of conquering themselves, what rapture would be experienced even here. If the ambitious man would conquer his ambition—that restless, craving, insatiable monster, which cares neither for slaughtered millions nor ruined nations, so that its vain dreams may be carried out—what peace he would have within. How great would be his felicity, while he felt himself firm on the truthful rock of ages; abiding in the protection of the holy and true One. His soul shining with the pearls of imperishable beauty; clothed with the garments of salvation; feeling his heart burn within him while his Saviour talks with him by the way, and having around him countless opportunities of strengthening himself in angelic graces from day to day. And then before him glitters his everlasting home. There dwells the king in all his beauty. There are the hosts of the happy. There are all his present joys immensely increased, and there are also new joys and glories yet undreamt of. All that delight the pure heart, all that can charm the pure thought, all that can bless every heightened sense, is there; and all these increasing in beauty and blessing for ever.

Such are the fruits of sin overcome. Out of the eater indeed comes forth meat: out of the strong indeed comes forth sweetness.

“When life’s tempestuous storms are o’er,
How calm he meets the friendly shore,
Who lived averse from sin!
Such peace on virtue’s path attends,
That where the sinner’s pleasure ends,
The Christian’s joys begin.

“See smiling patience smooth his brow!
See kindred angels downward bow,
To lift his soul on high;
While eager for the blest abode,
He joins with them to praise his God,
Who taught him how to die!”

SERMON XIV.

SAUL CHARMED BY DAVID'S HARP.

"And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."—1 Sam. xvi. 23.

Who has not felt the power of music? There is undoubtedly a correspondence between its varied sounds and the affections of the heart. The soft voice of the mother soothes the infant on the breast. Music speaks a language understood by all, savage and civilized alike: alike in all countries and all climes. The heart speaks by music; the intellect by words. Hence animals, since they have affections and desires, though far inferior in their nature and their number to those of man, are sensible to music. The sounds of fear scare them; the sounds of hope and love attract them. The whole animated creation breathe their sorrows in plaintive tones, and their raptures spring forth in joyous song. Each living thing has its own notes to make its feelings understood; and man commands the whole universe of song, because his nature is a miniature universe in itself. He has in his wonderful being an affection corresponding to that in each animal; hence he can imitate their cries and their songs: he has, besides, affections yearning after virtue, truth, wisdom, purity, peace, and all the sacred and sanctifying desires which attach him to immortal things; he can express all these therefore in music far surpassing that of all outward creation. He has a nobler nature than theirs, and therefore he can raise a nobler song. And when his purified affections shall pervade and hallow his whole being, and his spiritual body, made perfect by regeneration, shall express in its beautiful forms the holy character which is the likeness of his Lord, no doubt his speech will be most sweetly musical, and the voice, the liquid outpouring of the heart, will be equally adequate to whisper in luscious music its melodious delight, and to take part in the grand hallelujahs of heaven. The music of the heart will find its glowing expression

in the music of the voice. And, although to limit the bliss of the blessed ones in heaven to the joys of singing and of prayer, is certainly a most narrow and insufficient conception of their countless and varied delights, to do good must be a deeper source of rapture than to sing about it; yet, no doubt, the highest achievements of earth can give but a faint idea of the sublime anthems of heaven:—

“There, love divine, that holy flame,
Will all our powers employ;
To celebrate Jehovah's name,
In sweetest songs of joy.”

Music is in its very nature heavenly. Discord is infernal. Evil itself is a discord in the universe: its genuine utterances are all unharmonious: from the discordant roar of the battle-field, to the hiss-like whisper of secret sin, its whole real sounds are horrid. Harmony is from above, and is only prostituted when it is made to lend itself to cover vice. True, real music is the correspondence in the world of sound of true orderly affections, and invites us to realize what is noble and virtuous. Hence the evil spirit fled from Saul when David's harp was heard.

Saul is the type of the external man. He represents man as he is by nature, partly good, partly bad, with many advantages of person: he was graceful, and taller than any others of the children of Israel. He was possessed of rank, dignity, and command, yet he was not happy. He had become a king, had obtained great renown, and achieved over the enemies of his country decisive victories, but he was not happy. Like all who have not entered upon the struggle with selfishness, which is induced by true religion, he was jealous of the achievements of others. But the decisive trial of his life was the commission to go against Amalek. Samuel the prophet pointed out to him the requirement of heaven that Amalek should be wholly destroyed. Saul only partially performed this duty, leaving the king Agag alive, and destroying only what was vile and refuse of the property of the Amalekites. From that time his throne became insecure, the spirit of the Lord departed from him, and an evil spirit troubled him. This spirit departed when David's music was heard, on which the king was refreshed and was well: but in a short time he relapsed, and again the evil spirit was there. The king sunk from one trouble to another, until at length he fell under the arrows of the Philistines, and lost at the same time both crown and life.

This history is typical of that of a large class of mankind. How many are there on whom life's morning shines fair! They

are blest with happy homes, with a goodly share of the advantages of life, decorated with beautiful persons, having a wide circle of friends, and the best prospects in life. All things seem to promise a happy future—a successful existence. Yet, like Saul, they sink into moroseness and misfortune; their after years go down in shade, and they die unhappily. How is this? The divine history before us is intended to open this mystery to us. They will not faithfully destroy Amalek, and especially its king: they will not obey the Lord in fighting against that interior opposition to Him which was represented by that deceitful, corrupt, and treacherous people. The war with Amalek is urged with terrible distinctness in the Divine Word: "The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi: for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."—Exod. xvii. 14—16. The Amalekites were the first foes of the Israelites when they commenced their journey to Canaan; they were the most subtle and the most merciless. They were met with in the whole desert of the south and south-east, through which the Israelites had to pass, and were the most dangerous of their foes.

These resolute, constant, vindictive, and subtle enemies are the representatives of corrupt principles in the mind, equally obstinate, persevering, and subtle, which infest the spirit now; and to teach us that these must be overcome, and how they must be overcome, is the great lesson of the Bible, and the great lesson of life.

In the course of every individual life there are periods of struggle and trial. Duty and inclination are at variance. Religion says, Do right; self-interest urges, Do wrong. Innocence calls us to be pure; sensuality instigates to self-indulgence and pollution. Times come in which life and death, salvation, and everlasting ruin depend upon the result of the struggle. The Lord says, destroy Amalek utterly; root out all opposition to divine goodness and truth; spare no inclination which rises against the divine will,—no imagination which intrudes itself in the place of divine wisdom; destroy utterly the very purpose of resisting the commands of the Lord. However bitter it may seem, surrender for ever all desire of opposing the order and purity of heaven, especially the very essence of such desire—its king. If we do this truly, praying ardently to the Lord for help, resting upon His Word, supporting our feeble strength

by love and faith, we shall be like Moses when he sat upon the stone, with his arms supported by Aaron and Hur, and like him we shall be victorious over Amalek :—

“ When Moses stood with arms stretched wide,
Success was found on Israel's side ;
But when through weariness they failed,
That moment Amalek prevailed.”

If, on the contrary, we make reserves ; if we cannot submit some darling sin, some dear indulgence, some secret lawless delight, to the divine authority, we are like Saul, preserving Agag. We are entering upon a downward course of secret disobedience, which will result in utter ruin. Our evil may seem to us delicate, as Agag appeared when called for by Samuel, but only one course is open to the true servant of the Lord,—whatever is found to be really an enemy to God and goodness, must be utterly rooted out ; Agag must be hewed in pieces before the Lord. Unless we do this, there is no real progress made in our regeneration. One of the most fertile sources of error in self-knowledge is this : we find we are not guilty of the same kind of sin as we condemn in our neighbour ; we are not drunkards perhaps, we are not misers, we do not defraud any one of money in our dealings, and we conclude that we have nothing particular to blame and to change, although perhaps we may have other sins equally distant from the purity and the love of heaven ; we are quite ready to condemn the vices to which we are not prone, but this darling sin of ours we cannot bear to have touched,—it is an Agag that moves delicately. But in such case we fail in the very testing point ; we are unsound in the essential particular where we should have been faithful ; and because all other evil persons do the same, the kingdom of darkness is peopled. Each person's reservation of his darling evil was portrayed in this divine representation of Saul's preserving Agag. Thousands like Saul are quite willing to offer burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but not willing implicitly to obey just where obedience is really wanted, and so they are ruined like Saul. Oh that they would learn the grand lesson given to the mistaken king by Samuel ! Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams.

The first consequence of Saul's want of obedience was, that he lost the spirit of the Lord, and an evil spirit took its place. And this opens to our consideration the important truth, presented to us, indeed, both by revelation and experience, that we are in daily connection with the spirit-world, as well as with the world

of nature. Revelation familiarizes us with this great truth in all its pages. Angels are there regarded as *ministering spirits* to men, from the cradle to the grave. Our Saviour says of little children, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father, who is in heaven;" and of the good poor man: "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psalm xxxv. 7. "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."—Psalm xci. 11. While the reverse of this is clearly brought before us in the history we are considering. The Spirit of the Lord departed, and the evil spirit came. What an important and interesting fact is thus intimated, and pressed upon us! We stand between the powers of heaven and hell. We are companions of one or of the other in proportion as we incline to good or evil, to vice or virtue. Angels woo us to heaven; fiends entice us downwards. Could we see these spiritual companions as they really are, surely we could not hesitate for a moment as to our choice and our course. We should cling to our angelic friends and helpers; we should shrink from the impure monsters who have ruined themselves, and would fain ruin us. This doctrine of spiritual association is not only taught by the Scriptures, it is suggested and confirmed by reason and experience. All thoughts must come from minds; they are not wafted about like independent atoms in the air. Yet how often are suggestions received by us, both good and bad, which are not the results of previous trains of thought, which come upon us unexpectedly. They strike us, we say. A good man is ever being struck with something better, wiser, and holier; a bad man has opened to him deeper depths of guilt and sin, greater ingenuities of mischief, more awful mysteries of iniquity. The good ascend, assisted by their angelic guardian friends up the higher degrees of wisdom and goodness, the ladder which leads to heaven; the wicked sink by degrees of vice and impurity, changing the one evil spirit of their early disobedience to the seven others more wicked than he, which make their last state worse than their first.

Oh that this truth were known and felt! Did we fully rest convinced that we were indeed the companions of angels or devils, as we are the followers of virtue or vice, what an importance would be given to our every act. The triumphant villain, who exults over his successful crime, would probably feel little pleasure with his victory could he perceive the demons who are raising their jeers of malignant pleasure over him,—could he see them, as he one day will, glad that the tares they sowed in their mind

were fondly valued as his own, instead of being recognized and rejected at once as the work of his bitter foes. A large portion of the circumstances, not only of individual, but of general, human life would be much better understood if the companionship of man with spirits were more fully known and admitted. Strange epidemics set in upon mankind, and multitudes are affected with extraordinary manias, from which at other times they would shudder. They dance wildly, like the jumpers in Wales, they contort themselves strangely; they shriek out unknown tongues like the Irvingites and Mormons, they rush and tremble; and all who come within their sphere are strongly affected to do the same extravagant things. They lash themselves perhaps till blood comes, like the Dominicans in the middle ages. The common sense of mankind stands aghast; but could we see their spiritual associates we should behold some demoniac crew urging them to these absurd and frantic excesses. After a time the mania ceases and peace ensues. The storm subsides, the spirit-atmosphere is stilled, and all is well. The explanation of all this is that some portions of mankind have brought themselves into such a state that a certain class of evil spirits could more fully operate into them than usual, and these phrenzied outbursts have been the result. Some wild hell has been opened to them, and the awful delusions that prevail there have rushed out and affected mankind in a similar manner, who, for want of a knowledge of the spirit-world, have taken these blasts from hell for airs from heaven. The tumult has continued until, from the same voice which hushed the stormy waters of Galilee, the fiat goes forth, "Peace, be still; with authority He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."—Mark i. 27. He, only half understands the influences which act upon man, who regards only his body-side. The influences which affect him most potently, come to him through his spirit. So is it with the world. Its great soul is the spirit-world; all its great movements are from thence, and when it is greatly wrong, it is because the spirit-world has become crowded with corruptions from degenerate multitudes pouring into it from fallen churches, and to change the current of wrong, it is needful that judgment should be effected there; that the spirit-world should be cleared, and He who sits upon the throne should say, "Behold, I make all things new."—Rev. xxi. 5. Then the world, freed from its incubus, leaps forth on a new career of liberty, light, benevolence, virtue, science, improvement of every kind, and a new church begins. Hence the Scriptures always precede the account of new dispensations upon earth, by a description of judgment

in the spiritual sphere of things. "Now is the judgment of this world, said the Lord: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."—John xii. 31. Again, "I beheld Satan like lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

This subject, however, we cannot now pursue. Yet it is full of interest and importance. The world has its times when the spirit of the Lord departs from it, or, rather, is excluded from it, and evil spirits trouble it, as they troubled Saul. The evil spirit is said to be sent from God, when the spirit of the Lord departed. And it may, at first sight, seem strange that the evil spirit, as well as the good, should come from the Divine Being. But we must remember that He is the Governor of the universe. All things are under His control, either by ordination or by permission. All good He ordains and provides. Evil He only permits, and so arranges that the least possible evil and misery take place. Among the arrangements of His Providence, it is one, that when a man himself chooses evil, spirits who are in that same evil are permitted to associate with him. In this way, by their suggestions, which he can reject if he pleases, he can see the vile character of the principles which he has adopted, and shun them. He is also in less danger of mixing good and evil together, and thus sinking into the worst possible state of guilt than if he had good angels only for his constant associates. Hence, in the same way as the Lord said to the evil spirit who had been cast out of the man among the tombs, and entreated to go into the swine, "Go," giving them permission to do that which they desired, so in the present instance, the evil spirit is said to be from God, because from mercy the Lord permits such spirits to come to those who cannot bear the presence of the good. Let us now, however, return to the unhappy king.

When he felt his soul disturbed by this unwonted influence, his advisers counselled him to obtain one who could play well upon the harp, and while the music fell softly on his soul, a change of state would be induced, the evil spirit would depart, and the king would recover (ver. 16). In this, they were guided, no doubt, by the Divine Wisdom. Perhaps, also, some lingering remains of the knowledge of correspondences disposed all the parties to acquiesce in this dictate from heaven. For to play upon the harp, was precisely what was wanted to dispel the moody discontent of the king, according to the science of corre-

spondences. Saul had come into his sad condition from sympathy with Amalek, and having spared its king, Agag. Amalek sprang indirectly from Abraham, being a grandson of Isaac, through the marriage of a son of Esau, Eliphaz, with a concubine, Timna (Gen. xxxvi. 12). He represents, therefore, those who have an utter aversion to the work of regeneration, or a progressive preparation for heaven, founded upon false and gloomy ideas of faith. They picture to themselves a religion full of melancholy, gloom, and painful sacrifice. They think of God, not as a Divine Father, Saviour, and Friend, but as a Monarch infinitely powerful, and unalterably rigid. Theirs is the religion of fear, terror, and dislike. They suppose they must submit to it some time, but they will defer it as long as they can. Such are they who are spiritually under the Amalekitish influence, and whom Saul sparing Agag symbolized.

Some years ago, in conversation with a friend, himself a Calvinist, a miserable-looking man passed us, clothed in rags. My friend remarked, "There goes a true Antinomian, an old miscreant who has killed his wife, ruined his children, thrown away by drunkenness and beastliness all his chances in life, and made himself the poor creature you see. But he says it is not his fault. If God wants him to turn, He must turn him, he can't turn himself. He is what God made him, and when God wants him otherwise, He must make him that." Such is an Amalekite, with an aversion of all that is good, fostered by a perversion of a few truths, and a hatred of all the rest.

Poor infatuated men! they are far from being what God made them. He made them with so much of heaven in them, that He can say over the little ones, as He did in the days of His flesh, "Of such is the kingdom of God." "It is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." He has given to every man the germ of an angelic state, to combat his fallen nature. He has given His angels charge over every child. He has given His Word, and His Church upon earth, with all its varied forms, to suit every state under which humanity exists. His truth comes to every man, in some form or other, and if man will improve the little he understands, by using it to purify his heart and life, more and higher truth will be given him. Nothing is wanting on God's part; He is Love itself, only let man be true, and strive to be good, and power will be given him, and he will walk the courts of heaven. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

When any one is forgetful of these things, and sinks into

melancholy, despair, and abhorrence of religion, which ought to be their truest joy, the divine method of cure is indicated by David's playing upon the harp.

All music, as we have before observed, corresponds to the harmonies of the soul. The music of wind instruments, as flowing directly from the performer, corresponds to the play of the affections and their delights. This music is the sweetest, and the most energetic. Who that has listened to the tender warbling of the flute, and has not felt its sweet discourse awakening the very soul of harmony within? Or, if manly and great emotions need to be called forth, what is there so potent as the trumpet? These go to the heart direct. And, when, Divine Wisdom is describing those appeals to man which are intended to touch his affections, the prophet is described as one playing on such an instrument, as in the prophecy of Ezekiel, "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not."—xxxiii. 32. The Lord described the states of those he addressed in a similar manner. "Whereunto shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like children sitting in the market place, and calling one to another and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not wept."—Luke vii. 31, 32. Divine Mercy is ever piping unto us, giving us the sweetest invitations to happiness and to heaven. But it is often true now as it was then, we have not danced. We are dull, and cold, and heedless. Divine Mercy mourns at our inattention, but we ourselves are unconcerned; we have not wept. Oh! if we knew our true interests, the bare possibility of being excluded from heaven would induce tears of bitterest agony; while the welcome invitations of Divine Love would make us indeed dance with delight. Let us, my beloved hearers, listen with joy to the heavenly messages here, and at last it will be our exulting portion to hear, as John did, a voice from heaven, as of a trumpet, saying to us, "Come up hither."

The harp is a stringed instrument, and being played with the fingers, its music expresses more of the precision of the intellect, than of the fulness of the heart. The understanding, animated by the love of truth, is like the golden frame of the harp, the spiritual truths of religion are its strings, and praise to the Lord and hope and joy for man, are its music. From this representative character of the harp, it comes to be so often mentioned in the Psalms, and we are called upon so frequently to praise the Lord upon the harp: "Then will I go unto the altar

of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God."—Psalm xliii. 3, 4. "O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early."—Psalm cviii. 1, 2. "Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm."—Psalm xcvi. 5. In the seventy-first Psalm, the stringed instruments as representatives of the truths of heaven in the mind, are mentioned. "I will praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou holy one of Israel." The psaltery was a kind of harp, and yet it is described as "Thy truth, O my God." And when we regard the soul well-furnished with heavenly truths, a soul tuned to praise as a holy harp, sometimes swept by angel-fingers, and filling the mind with joy and gladness, we shall see that all may praise the Holy One upon the harp.

In the eternal world, where all the principles and states of the inhabitants are expressed by the objects around them, and what is seen is the outbirth and index of what is not seen, the music of the angels fell upon the rapt ear of the prophet-apostle John, as the voice of great thunder, and the voice of harpers harping with their harps (Rev. xiv. 2). And when he observed the heavenly minstrels nearer, he says, "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."—Rev. xv. 2. The sea of glass expresses the transparent clearness of their knowledge, the fire the holy glow of their love, while the harps of God are expressive of their glorious intellects tuned to praise. Each victorious saint has a harp of God. He has fought the good fight, and obtained the victory over evil and falsehood within and without; the ~~beast~~ and his image, the mark and the number; and now with all the truths of heaven acquired, and seen, and felt, the soul pours out its joys in praise. They have the harps of God. There is no music produced which is not the outbirth of inward feeling. The harp is of God. The spirit of God flows through the angelic soul which is already an inward harp, and produces a harp for the hand. It is the harp of God. It will pour forth celestial music, and that music is the genuine utterance of the joys within. It is the harp of God. We may regard the grand truths of religion as the strings of this spiritual harp. We look around upon the glories of creation on earth and in heaven, and we see Love and Wisdom reflected everywhere. This world of ours! What a scene it is of beauty and of blessing. The grand and

glassy ocean, which, like a boundless mirror, images the deep blue sky, the glowing sun, the silvery moon, and the ever-moving panorama of cloud and star; the green carpeted earth, the infinitely varied lovelinesses of the flowers, bedecking with living gems the land on every side; the flowering bushes, the stately trees with every shade of foliage, waving their majestic heads in luxury of life, and ever rising higher to the light; while over all, the magnificent arch which covers in this palace of our God, in the still cerulean hue of day, and the brilliant blaze of golden grandeur in the night; ever suggesting infinitudes of solemn majesty, order, mercy, and peace, constitute a whole, opening out the heart to adoration, love, and praise. But this world, this system of stars, and worlds, is but the spangled robing of an inner and a higher. It is but the nursery of the universe, where our heavenly Father schools his children, and though furnished with objects to train us for the higher life, they all are plainly made. We are on the bark of the universe, and from our rough covering can only faintly guess the glories which are within. We live on the threshold of the king's palace, and though the ornaments here are beautiful, what are they to the state apartments of the King of kings? All the glories of this universe, heightened ten thousand times, will fail to give us an adequate idea of the inner chambers of our Father's house.

"For if the outwards of our God
Be so immensely grand;
What is His own divine abode,
Where waiting angels stand?"

But if we can only faintly conceive and sketch the riches of our Creator's beneficence, we can appreciate enough to place the first string on our harp, and summon every power of the soul to praise and adore for His goodness. Let this be the first note of our music, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."—Psalm cvii. 8.

But, while we adore the Lord as our Creator, we cannot but remember that our creation would have largely failed in its grand object,—the formation of an ever-increasing heaven from the human race, had it not been for our redemption. Better for us had we never been born, than to be born unredeemed bond-slaves of infernals. When therefore we had sunk where no finite hand could savingly reach us, our Father became our Redeemer. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him (Isa. lix.

16). In His love and in His pity He redeemed us. Shall we not therefore put a string to our spirit's harp to celebrate redemption? Can any strain be too high to raise, to celebrate the Infinite Mercy, which bowed the heavens, and came down and brought God in Christ to reconcile the world to Himself, to live, to die, and to rise again, that we might be rescued and be happy.

"O for a seraph's golden lyre,
With chords of light and tones of fire,
To sing Jehovah's love;
To tell redemption's wondrous plan,
How God descended down to man,
That man might rise above."

And, shall our harp not have another string to tell the mercies of our Regenerator? Can we look back to the events of our individual lives, and not desire to bless the mercy which has watched over our every hour? Have not goodness and mercy followed us every day? Have we not been saved when we were reckless, spared when we were guilty, encouraged when we were despairing, cheered when we were languishing, strengthened when we were weak, enlightened when we were dark, comforted when we were sad, and blessed with ten thousand mercies, and shall not our harp have a string to record all this? Oh yes, every moment has had its mercy, and shall have its praise. We have been blessed in our health and our strength, in our powers of body, and in our faculties of mind; we have been blessed in our opportunities of improvement, and in the struggles of temptation; we have been blessed in the Word, and in the power to perceive its strength, its salvation, and its beauty; we have been blessed in our victories past, and confiding in His help in all our life to come, and in our death our harp shall still tremble with His praise,—

"Bless, bless His name."

We might go on with fresh strings to our harp, with fresh truths to celebrate the mercies of our Lord. The Psalmist mentions an instrument of ten strings (Psalm cxliv. 9); and possibly when the ten commandments are represented as the holy laws of love, and when we gratefully revere them, and keep them in the spirit and in the letter, they will form for us such an instrument from which the spirit's music may ascend, and be welcomed by Him who "upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down" (Psalm cxlv. 14).

Such is the correspondence of David's harp. David himself is the type of the spiritual man, and in the highest sense of the Lord, of the divine king of Israel. We wish now, however,

not to distract your attention, and confine ourselves therefore to the application of the passage to man. Saul is the representative of the natural man, disturbed by evil influences under the operation of evil spirits to whom he has laid himself open. David represents the spiritual man, with his grateful and cultivated intellect. Saul is troubled with discontent, with distaste for the things of heaven, with ill-humour, with melancholy, with gloom at the present, and with a fearful looking forward to judgment. But David is brought forward: his better man is brought to view; he has his harp with him; he touches its various strings; it speaks of gratitude to the Lord as our Father, our Saviour, and Friend; the sweet notes swell with adoration, love, praise, and hope, and as the music rises, the discontent and gloom give way, and Saul is refreshed and is well.

To teach this lesson, it was, that in the time of types and shadows with the Jewish nation, this event took place, and was recorded in the Word of God.

Are we not all occasionally like Saul, my beloved hearers? Do we not all at times hesitate to sacrifice some principle which, like Agag the Amalekite, is an enemy to our true progress, and watches our weak moments to betray us? Oh, let us be faithful! Whatever the Word, our Samuel in these days, says destroy, let us fearlessly extirpate. But if from our weakness, and our wickedness, we have compelled our good angels to depart, and the evil ones have come; if we are in trouble and dismay, fretful in ourselves, and discontented with all around us, let us be sure and call for David and his harp. Let our spiritual, our better nature, be brought forward; let the strings of the harp each be touched, and the music of the soul be heard; let our blessings be numbered with grateful hearts,—and rest assured the evil spirit will depart, and we shall be refreshed, and be well.

Sometimes we are discontented and churlish because some cherished plan of worldly success has failed,—some object upon which we had fixed our hearts has not fully realized our expectations, and the evil spirit troubles us. But let David's harp be heard. Let the earthly blessings even we enjoy be enumerated. Let us be reminded of what we receive daily and hourly; of our health, whereas disease is possible at every point, from the head to the heel; of our food, of our clothes, of our domestic comforts; of our possession of sound faculties, bodily and mental; of our having the blessings and privileges of two worlds—the natural and the spiritual; and if this string sound out in proper fulness, our discontent will disappear like a mote in the sun-beam, and we shall be refreshed and be well.

But, some one has been unkind, has spoken a harsh word, or treated us ill; and we resent, and think we do well to be angry. Let the string of redemption be touched. What had become of man, if God had not been forgiving? Let it speak of Him who forgave His murderers; of Him who was reviled, but who reviled not again; who was led like a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. And from His life and from His cross let us learn to be patient, gentle, and forgiving. As God in Christ forgave us, let us forgive each other. Thus may we be led to realize those gracious words of His: "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great; and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil."—Luke vi. 35. He is kind to us, who have been so often forgetful of Him. Let us be kind to each other. Surely, while this sweet music is heard, the evil spirit will depart, and we shall be refreshed and be well.

We are impatient, perhaps, at our spiritual progress. We thought we had been more advanced than we are. We think our trials have been long enough. We scarcely know what to make of ourselves. We find much which we thought we had finally discarded had only slumbered. We doubt much of our states, and are unhappy. Amalekites, which we thought were all subdued and expelled, have crossed our path again, and we find we have not been as faithful as we thought, and we are melancholy. Let the harp be struck again, and we shall hear its blessed notes. "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters: He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. 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." Ah no, we will neither complain, nor fear. The divine care has been sufficient for us thus far, and will surely be our safeguard onwards. We know not our precise position in the regenerate life, nor is it good for us to know. It is enough that the Lord invites us to cast our care upon Him. He has brought us through a thousand dangers, and He will not leave us now. He is too good to forsake us, too wise not to know what is best for us, and too powerful to be overcome. We will banish every fear, confide in the merciful care of our God and Saviour, and do well the duty of to-day, ever mindful that sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. We will praise the Divine Goodness for

all mercies past, and trust Him for every state to come. In all the changing scenes of life and death, our harp shall still tremble with His praise who brought us from darkness to His marvellous light, and we are assured will make us victorious at last. Thus shall our harp resound, like the golden harps of heaven, with—

“ Strains that hope and love impart,
Strains that chase away our fear,
Strains that elevate the heart.”

Thus will the evil spirit assuredly depart, and we shall be refreshed, and be well.

All experience teaches that there will be times of mourning and depression for all. Sorrow is induced from outward and from inward causes. Night follows day in the spiritual as well as in the natural world. Sometimes darkness is induced from outward afflictions, loss of health, loss of dear relatives, loss of property, and occasionally all coming thickly upon the heels of each other; for sorrows, as well as joys, go in groups. These are not themselves temptations, but sometimes they are the occasions of very bitter temptations indeed. Discontent will set in upon the soul; a feeling that we are hardly dealt with, will deepen within us; and the gloom will thicken upon us even to despair. And in such nights, how blessed is it to have the spirit furnished with a harp,—a harp of God to cheer us! When we hear the divine counsel, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy door about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast” (Is. xxvi. 20); how salutary is it in our loneliness to have a spiritual harp to cheer us, and to sing those songs of comfort which have been given to cheer us in our spiritual gloom. “Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law.”—Psalm cxix. 54, 55. To be furnished then with a spiritual harp,—to bring out its varied tones of gratitude and praise,—to utter from our depths of loneliness and sorrow faith in our God, our Saviour, and our Father, love still fondly clinging to Him, and to His divine law; a conviction that all His ways are right, and in due time we shall see and acknowledge their surpassing rectitude; a remembrance of past mercies, and a Job-like trust that at last our deliverer will appear and turn our mourning into joy: these and a thousand other topics will cheer our dark night, and help us to look forward to a coming morning, in which sorrow and sighing will flee away. Make, then, my beloved hearers, for each of you, a heavenly harp. String it with divine truths. Have it ready for tones of praise

and adoration. Delight in acknowledging with thankfulness the blessings you daily receive. "Sing 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." Sweet is the music of the soul when thus honouring and adoring the Giver of every blessing. But still sweeter are its tones in times of sorrow: the spirit needs it then. When fainting from fear, we exclaim, "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." And if we do this, we shall find, though weeping endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning. Our anguish will pass away, and in the morning of a new state, the beams of the sun of heaven will cleave through the gloom, and the murky shades will disappear. Then can we take a joyful note once more, and sing, "Awake up, my glory, awake psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds."

Thus shall we have the spirit's music in joy and in sorrow. And the time will come, when the shades of death will gather around us, and nature's voice be altogether hushed. But when our ears no longer are sensible to the tones of earth, they will be all the more opened to the music of heaven. How delighted shall we be to catch its delicious sounds, and to join our harp to theirs, while welcoming us to join their blessed company, they take as the burden of their hymn,—

"Soldier of Christ, thy laurels wear,
 Thou hast the victory won;
 Angelic blessings thou shalt share,
 Thy earthly work is done.
 Come, join the burst of holy joy,
 Which through the heavens shall ring;
 O grave, where is thy victory!
 O death, where is thy sting!"

SERMON XV.

THE TREE PLANTED BY THE WATERS.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."—Ps. i. 3.

THE book of the Psalms is the Christian's daily guide. There is no state into which he may fall or rise but will be found to have been described and realized there. The changes of the soul are not treated as abstractions, but as real things. The spirit is shewn labouring under guilt, and crying with agony for pardon and help, or as relieved and pouring itself forth in praise. A laying open of the varying conditions of the regenerate life, its cloud and sunshine, its pain and peace, its deep self-knowledge and self-condemnation, and its slowly returning consolation, all are displayed and unfolded in this Divine Book with a living graphic force and truthfulness that really spiritually minded men, in all ages, have thankfully made it their daily manna of devotion, their heavenly daily bread. And, in this, they have done wisely. Suffer me to advise you, my beloved hearers, to do the same. He who resolves to let no day pass without reading and pondering upon some portion of these Divine Songs, will find them a comfort, a strength, and a blessing; a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his eyes.

The Psalms open with the beautiful word, Blessed. A word which is not only the first, but contains in itself the result to be realized at last. It is so placed as if to shew us that the good man's regeneration begins from God and heaven within, and is brought out by his successive states until it spreads over his whole mind. He starts from blessed principles within, and he comes to blessedness in fulness. The first manifestation of the inner life, in the outer, consists in putting down evil there: it is negative. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. As he thus resists evil his delight in

the truth increases. His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. This meditation upon the Divine Word leads to growth in knowledge, perception, and wisdom. He becomes like a tree planted by the waters.

Before proceeding, we would here call your attention to the correspondence of a tree, which we have given in previous discourses. It corresponds to the perception of truth in the mind. This perception grows from the slightest idea at first, until it acquires a lofty and all-protecting influence in the soul. From a seed it grows up to become a tree. A man perceives truth very slightly at first. He sees little of its nature and less of its application; but as he continues to be faithful to the commandments of his God, the truth becomes larger and nobler within him, until it covers his whole life. This was the correspondence of the tree when we treated of Eden; again, when we dwelt upon the parable of the trees choosing a king; and now it is the same in the spiritual sense of the Psalms. Such is the uniformity of the divine rule according to which the Word of God has been written, and by which its divine lessons can really be opened.

This same signification of tree continues through the Psalms, the prophets, and the New Testament. For, of course, David could have no other than this same spiritual use of tree when he said, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever."—Ps. lii. 8. Where it is most evident, that the tree corresponds to something in man. In the ninety-second Psalm a very beautiful instance occurs of the correspondence of a tree. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing: To shew that the Lord is upright: He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." Here we have not only the spiritual likeness of man to a tree, but to different kinds of trees. He shall grow like a palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar. The palm-tree representing man's growth in the perceptions of goodness; the cedar-tree the increase of his perceptions of truth. A most important truth, also, is couched in the remark as to the place where the trees are to be planted. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, or Jehovah, shall flourish in the courts of our God." The house of Jehovah means a state in which divine love bears rule. They who are planted in such a state flourish in the courts of divine truth, our God. The great secret why we often make little progress in the truth, is, that we do not cultivate the good. Let

us seek daily to become more planted and rooted in love, and we shall find, as the result, that we shall flourish abundantly in more enlarged perceptions of the right and the beautiful. We shall know of the doctrine that it is of God. And we shall realize, too, the declaration, they shall still bring forth fruit in old age: for the fruits of virtue and usefulness will be daily increasing, and their perfection advance as our progress in the regenerate life enables us to act from purer motives and greater faithfulness. And all our advancement will be an evidence of the constant goodness and wisdom of our Heavenly Father, from whom alone all good proceeds.

When we observe the correspondence of trees we shall perceive that the call for them to praise the Lord is something more definite than we might previously have thought. "Praise ye the Lord," says the Psalmist, "Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars" (Ps. cxlviii. 9); where fruitful trees express truths for practice more especially, and all cedars, are truths of expansive thought and enlarged ideas. There is a striking passage in Isaiah, which seems extremely obscure without the spiritual sense of tree, but very striking with it. "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree: I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box together: That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."—Chap. xli. 19, 20. When we discern the correspondence of trees we can perceive how the implantation of them in the wilderness and the desert, can enable man to see, and know, and understand. Unless his perceptions of truth are opened and advanced, he must remain in spiritual darkness; but, in proportion as by study and reflection, from a sincere and earnest love of truth, he learns, and meditates upon, the divine lessons of the Word, his previous barren mind becomes furnished and beautiful as a garden of the Lord. The prophet Ezekiel has many striking instances of the spiritual correspondence of trees. There is one whole chapter, the thirty-first, which is full of it. In the seventeenth, too, there is a remarkable passage, which, without that, is difficult to be understood. "Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it: I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof

shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish : I the Lord have spoken and have done it."—Ver. 22—24.

The highest branch of the high cedar is the perception of the Lord as a Divine Man. This, when seen in the intellect, and loved by a Supreme affection, is planted on the mountain of the height of Israel, and it makes all other perceptions of the mind harmonious, expanded, and complete.

The most exalted view which reason can grasp is, that God is an infinitely glorious Divine Man. That He is infinitely all that a good and true man is finitely. That just as finite man impresses on all his works something which bespeaks the finite human character of their author, so upon all His works the Creator has manifested a likeness to humanity, and, most of all, upon His immortal creatures, who are images of Him. All things in the universe have a likeness to man. Men are universes in miniature. Men and the universe are types of each other, and the reason is, they both are outbirths from Him who is the infinite Divine Man. They resemble each other because they resemble Him. This truth, that God is a Divine Man, is the highest branch of the high cedar, and when it is transplanted into the Church, and loved there, when God is loved in the person of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus, it brings forth boughs, and bears fruit, and is a goodly cedar. Under it dwells every noble, heavenly thought,—the fowls of every wing. A revolution takes place in all man's previous perceptions. Instead of regarding the Divine Being as a distant, awful, unfeeling power, He is adored as a loving Heavenly Father and Redeemer. Then the previous high tree is brought down, and the low tree is exalted; the previous green tree is dried up, and the dry tree is made to flourish.

The same correspondence of tree forms the basis of much of the teaching of the Divine Saviour in the gospel. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field : Which indeed 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."—Matt. xiii. 31, 32. The perception of man, that he was born for heaven, is the smallest of all the truths then perceived by the mind. But if united to love, if warm, like the mustard seed, it grows. It becomes daily of more importance. It becomes more and more the all-pervading idea. We are more

and more convinced that our business should be so carried on as not to peril our everlasting peace: our friends should be such as will assist us in our journey of life, so that we arrive at the goal of heavenly rest: our tempers should be moulded to the Christian pattern: our homes should be so ordered as to be a miniature heaven, and thus over every department of life religion should put forth her branches, and cover, hallow, and protect the whole. Then has the mustard seed grown to become a large tree, and all the birds of heaven can make their nests in the shadow of it. This tree becomes so great, because in the seed there is contained the germs and elements of all true greatness. If we believe that man is born for heaven, there is involved in that, the conviction of the existence of heaven, and all its laws of order and happiness. There is implied the Lord who reigns there, and all his divine excellencies and attributes; there is implied the regenerate life to fit man for heaven, and thus our redemption and liberty, our love, and faith, and virtue; all that is meant by religion is implied in this little seed. The kingdom of heaven is like unto it, and the kingdom of heaven is contained in it. O may we take it and plant it in the fields of our souls!

The use of the tree in the language of correspondence is very frequent indeed in the New Testament. "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—Matt. vii. 17—20. The trees, undoubtedly, have relation to men.

The circumstance of the religious state in the mind being likened unto a tree, in its growth and gradual production, shews to the reflective mind how extremely fallacious are those views of religion which make it a spasm, a convulsion, a thing done all at once. With them a man is black as death at one moment, and then, by an electric shock, as they fancy, a man is instantaneously made as white as heaven. All that religion can do for him is done. But no, says the Scripture, religion is like a tree. It grows gradually. Trees do not start up by convulsions; they grow slowly: seasons pass over them, and at various times there are leaves, blossoms, and beautiful displays; then followed by wintry seasons, when all seems bare and barren. But still the tree grows on. In spring and summer the parts above ground grow, and in winter the roots. So is it with man. From his first sincere convictions he advances with continual change. At one time all is blooming and delightful with him; at another all

is wintry, cold, and bare. Yet, in his states of sadness, the roots of religion grow. Humility, self-examination, a true estimation of the things of time; a sincere trust in the Lord, and a refuge under the shadow of His Divine protection; all these principles increase in time of sorrow, and thus prepare the way for great spiritual prosperity in the future.

"From all our afflictions salvation shall spring,
The deeper our sorrows, the sweeter we'll sing."

In our text the lover of the law of the Lord is said to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. These rivers are the streams of divine truth. He is said to be near them who brings his mind into harmony with them. He who keeps close to what truth teaches, who brings his thoughts, sentiments, views, and feelings, and above all, his life, into conformity with the lessons of Heavenly Wisdom; the man who considers each day to bring himself as near as possible to what his daily study of the Word unfolds, is like a tree planted by the waters.

The waters—what an expressive and beautiful symbol of truths themselves. In the book of Revelation, John is stated to have seen a river of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb (chap. xxi. 1). The water of life, the truths of love. How striking is the correspondence of water. How pearly it looks when the sun's light is upon it, it is like liquid silver. It is bright and clear, like truth. It satisfies the thirst, and diffuses over the body a refreshing moisture, aiding every organ, and diffusing health and satisfaction throughout. So to the mind does truth. It gratifies the appetite for intelligence. It throws health and comfort through our spirits, and assists every genuine operation within us. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. But water purifies too. It makes the body clean, and truth cleanses the soul. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," saith the Lord, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." "Sanctify them by thy truth: thy word is truth."—John xvii. 17.

"Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you."—John xv. 3.

But we must not fail to remark that the good man is said to be planted by the *rivers* of water. And while we remember that water is the symbol of truth, in its proper character as clear, satisfying, and purifying to the mind, rivers of water especially correspond to truth, received into the best affections of the heart, and flowing down to fertilize the life with heavenly virtues.

Truth is sometimes received only into the memory, or, if further, only into the intellect, and is then only a thing for occasional amusement, or for intellectual display, or for pride of victory. Many persons, it has been well remarked, will talk for truth, wrangle for truth, write for it, fight for it, die for it, but few will truly live for it. Now truth in the minds of those who do not use it for daily practice, is like a stagnant pool, not like a river. Water at rest engenders foulness, malaria, noxious ugly creatures, disgusting and filthy. So is it with truth unused. The mind which possesses it often becomes filled with self-conceits, with vain dreams of pre-eminence over others, because of knowing more; whereas, he who knows more than others, and does less, is not a wiser man than others, in proportion to his knowledge, but a more foolish. Nothing is more lamentable to see than a man animated with pride in his intellect, and contempt for others, because of his having more unused knowledge than they. He may be brilliant sometimes in talk, but he is like a man spending his fortune and time in letting off fireworks: he is like one who is pining to death while he has vast stores of provisions which he is not wise enough to eat: he is like a person who has a large reservoir of water of which he never drinks, while he is dying for thirst; with which he never washes, while he is covered with dirt: and which he never turns over his land, although it is so parched it produces nothing. In such case, in time, we lose the truth we have neglected. "My people have committed two evils," says the Lord, "they have forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jer. ii. 13. But truth, as rivers of water, is that heavenly intelligence which the heart hails and appreciates in its inmost affections. Rivers rise in mountains; the rains and vapours of the upper regions filtrate through the mountain-tops, and give rise to fountains and rills which form rivers, and pour over the plains and valleys the rich means of beauty and abundance. Thus, too, it is with truth, when it is received and lifted into the heart. It comes forth again in gushing streams, flowing to do good. Flashes of silvery sentiments, dancing in the sunbeams, like crystal rills on the mountain-side, will flow down from the inner heights of the soul, and the whole mind will be satisfied, and the life will be like a fair land, teeming with plenty. All truth, as it flows from the Lord, was seen by the prophet-apostle John, as a magnificent river in the spirit-world. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."—Rev. xxii. 1. The water of life means truth filled

with love, for love is real life. It flows from the Lord through heaven, which is His throne; where, as to His Inmost Divinity and His Divine Humanity, He reigns for ever. What a sublime idea it is! A magnificent stream of truth, flowing from love, to fertilize and bless heaven and earth. O may we drink of its sacred waters! Blessed be His holy name who caused it to be written,—“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whomsoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—Rev. xxii. 17.

The same glorious water of truth is meant when the Psalmist exclaims, “There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” The Church, the true city of God, is indeed made glad by the sacred waters of the Holy Word. Its streams go forth in every direction to purify, to hallow, and to bless:—

“See, from Zion’s sacred mountain
Streams of living water flow!
God has opened there a fountain:
This supplies the plains below.
They are blessed
Who its sovereign virtues know.”

The tree of the genuine Christian’s religion is said to be planted by or near the rivers of water, to intimate that it grows in harmony with its divine doctrines. He has no far-fetched conceits, no whims of vain fancies, unfounded in the teachings of heavenly wisdom. His tree grows near the waters. He reads the Sacred Word day by day, and forms his views and sentiments by its lessons. Daily his tree grows in strength and height, because it is daily fed by the refreshing streams of living water. He learns, and loves, and lives, the precepts of heavenly virtue. Nor must we forget that man plants his own tree there. The earlier lessons of religion, such as become our childhood and youth, may be planted by others, but religion, when it becomes a tree, when it forms a rational perception of spiritual things, a noble system on which to think, to rest, and to live, must be planted by our own hands. The Lord provides the seed and the soil. He will give the rain, the light, the heat, and the other potent secret influences which are required, but we must dig the soil, plant the tree, and keep it clear from weeds, to give it room to grow. “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed 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."

The seed of true faith, the conviction that we are really born for heaven, is, at first, the smallest, the least influential, thought of the mind. It is nothing like the size of grammar, of arithmetic, of the varied sciences, of the whole army of knowledge, which has come in by the senses. It is like the faintest streak of light which distinguishes the earliest dawn, but it will grow. It is an immensity within it. If I am really born for heaven, there must be a heaven for which I am destined. That must be an abode of heavenly order, heavenly love, and heavenly wisdom. I have but the germs of heaven within me. I must work them out. I have tempers, principles, and practices, which are not heavenly, these must be cast out. I cannot do this of myself, but He who made me to be happy will give me the means. It is a great work, I must not delay. The only way to be prepared for heaven hereafter, is to be heavenly here

All this is contained in this sacred seed. Faith is in it, love is in it, works are in embryo, heaven is in it, the Spirit of the Lord is in it, and as we ponder upon it these things unfold, and it grows, it enlarges in the soul. It puts forth a branch nearest the earth, to direct and influence our daily habits: it puts forth another to extend over our friendships, for he is no true friend of the Christian who is not a lover of the good and the true: another branch comes to overshadow and direct our business, so that this is brought under the principles of justice and judgment: another branch over our home, and directs that it should be a little heaven: another over the education of our children, others over the other branches of our life; while the whole keeps towering upwards, rejoicing in the air and light of heaven, until it becomes a grand tree. Such is the growth and development of the tree of spiritual perception. It is small at first, but having within it the elements of all that is great and good, it becomes at last a glorious tree, under which we can rest, and on and around which, every noble, lofty, brilliant, blessed thought, like birds of heaven, can nestle and can play.

Let us, however, go on to the next particular in the divine description. That bringeth forth his fruit in due season. Fruit is an essential sign of the value of the tree. No matter what beauty of foliage, of splendour or flower there may be, if there be no fruit on the fruit-tree its value is slight indeed. The religion of man is the same. Without the works in which love and faith embody themselves where they exist, it is nothing. You remember what the Divine Owner of the vineyard is represented

to have said. "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"—Luke xiii. 7. When the Saviour, on his road to Jerusalem, came to the fig tree covered with leaves, but having no fruit thereon, He said, "Let no fruit grow on thee, henceforward for ever; and presently the fig tree withered away." An expressive and significant token of the sad termination of a career in which there has been much profession, but practice has been wanting. "By their fruits," said our Lord, on another occasion, "ye shall know them."—Matt. vii. 20. The fruit embodies all the excellencies of the tree. Such as the tree is, such is the fruit. Oh, that we looked fully and constantly to this doctrine of works, not of course as involving any idea of merit, but as manifesting what we are, and have been. There is no more merit in a good work than in a good thought or a good faith. What have we which we have not received? It is of mercy, the richest mercy, that we are brought out of our evil condition, and gifted with the ability given to us, every moment to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. But we must work. By works is faith made perfect. By works is love made perfect. Works are the manifestation of the inward character. We are to a great extent what we do. Hence, the Scriptures ever declare our final lot to be determined by our works. "God will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."—Rom. ii. 6—11. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and to enter in through the gates into the city. Be assured, no righteousness is real righteousness which is not a doing righteousness. "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."—Deut. vi. 25. "He that DOETH righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous."—1 John iii. 7. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah vi. 8.

Oh, that this real practical religion were felt deeply by us all. Let us rest assured no righteousness will be accounted ours,

in the eternal world, which we have not made ours by practice. That vain dream of some, that the Divine Righteousness of the Lord Jesus will be put down to their account, and God will account them righteous, simply because they believe that the Saviour's righteousness is theirs, is a fearful delusion. Just as well might they suppose that Creation would be set down to their account, as that Redemption will. The robe of the Saviour's righteousness is one which none but He wears, it is Divine. "On His vesture and on His thigh was a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."—Rev. xix. 16. We must have robes more humble, but which will fit us, and be the expression of what the Lord's goodness, in our regeneration, has made us. Our robes must be made white in the blood of the Lamb, the divine wisdom of the Saviour; but we must not presume to remain unrighteous and dream we shall enter into heaven wrapped up in a stolen robe. The good tree bringeth forth fruit in his season. The fruits are varied in different seasons. In the book of Revelation it is said, "The tree of life yielded her fruit every month." The spirit has its changes both as to love and faith, both as to the sun and the moon, but the good man produces works of virtue in every state, and accommodated to every condition. In temptation he exhibits firmness and patience; in difficulty perseverance and self-possession; in cases of danger resolution, boldness, and decision; in business, activity, uprightness, and kindness; in worship, devotion, humility, and love; in learning the Word, diligence, thoughtfulness, and truthfulness; in all things, sincerity and earnestness. He brings forth his fruit in its season. The real worth of the good man will appear more fully the longer he is known, and with greater opportunity of testing him. He will be sure in trial and in triumph; in poverty and in riches; in sickness and in health; in life and in death, he will bring forth his fruit in his season.

We are next informed, and this is a beautiful and instructive intimation, "his leaf shall not wither."

There are two kinds of leaves, green leaves and flower leaves. They correspond to our conceptions, or the ideas we form, first, from the literal sense of the Word, meant by the green leaf, and then from the spiritual sense of the Word, meant by the flower. The superior loveliness and delicacy of the flower over the leaf, intimates the higher grace and more refined charm of interior views over the comparatively lower ones which we obtain from the letter of the Word. But the views derived from the letter of the Word when truly understood, as a basis for the spirit, will never perish. The leaf will not wither. The history of the Jews will

still remain in the mind, but it will be as the history of our regeneration. The knowledge of Canaan will not perish, but it will be regarded as the description of heaven. The Lord's life in the world will never cease to be regarded with reverence and with wonder, but it will be regarded as the great lesson of the movements of Divine Love and Wisdom in the soul; and thus seen, these leaves will become greener, fresher, more lovely, throughout eternity. As the soul altogether will become more redolent of health, of beauty, and as it were of youth, as everlasting ages pass, so all its ideas will become deepened, heightened, and invigorated, "Its leaf will not wither."

And, lastly, is added those expressive and important words, "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." This is a most important assurance. But it rests upon the doctrine that the Lord is the Universal Father. His Providence extends over all, and not in a general manner only, but enters into every particular of our lives. "Not a hair of your heads falls to the ground without your Heavenly Father's knowledge," says the Lord. And, again, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." And what a blessed assurance is that! Our God is not a remote, formless, incomprehensible intelligence. He is our Saviour, and under His kind guardianship "we live, and move, and have our being." With this conviction, the Christian may walk firmly and freely and lovingly, for "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." It is true, that possibly, his prosperity may lie in a different direction from that which he supposed. He may not succeed in something he intends; but it may result in something he did not intend. It will be all overruled for the best. The view of the ever-watchful, ever-present, ever-kind, Providence of the Lord, is full of comfort, and tends to entire freedom from anxiety and care. How large a number of mankind are oppressed with heart-corroding, health-destroying mistrusts and fears, who, if they could have a loving deep confidence that the Lord cares for them, both in their earthly and eternal concerns, would rise to spiritual freedom. Their burden would be cast off, and they would walk confidently, as if they held the Divine Friend and Father's hand. Of this we may be fully satisfied, that we are never forgotten. "The Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want." For He is too good to act from anything but Love and Mercy, too wise not to employ the best means for our help and elevation, and too powerful to be overcome by any who would do us harm. Whatsoever then the good man does, in the way which is best for him, it is sure to prosper.

This does not always appear to be so, but is ever really the

case. When Joseph was sent by his father to visit his brethren, and was seized by them, and cast into a pit to perish, and afterwards was sold as a slave, it did not seem that his affairs were prospering, but they really were so. When, afterwards, he was accused of evil, and sent to prison as ungrateful and vile, to appearance he was on the road to ruin, but it was really otherwise. This was the mode in which he was prepared to be an instrument of the Divine Providence, to save Egypt; to be promoted to honour and use; and to be a type of Him who ever saves us in our spiritual famines and distresses. So is it in the histories of all of us. Who cannot see, when he looks over his life, that many a thing which he once earnestly longed for, but was prevented from obtaining, would have been most detrimental had it been got. Many a disappointment, which we felt severely at the time, has manifestly been a blessing in disguise. In what the Lord permits, as well as in what He ordains, He has ever "eternal ends in view." And, hence, for the promotion of these ends, sometimes projects which we fondly desired to see prosper, fail, and something we suppose to be most disadvantageous occurs, but in the end our real prosperity is accomplished. Of all the blessed ones in heaven, it is said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—Rev. vii. 14. Tribulation is quite as essential to our real progress as is prosperity. By affliction we learn sympathy with others; we also learn humility. And these virtues are worth any price we can pay for them. The jewel which is being polished, most likely, if it could speak, might object to the rough hard treatment which is needed to bring out its brilliancy, but when its true lustre has been obtained, it is seen that the triumph far overpays the labour; and the gem that shines with so much beauty now, will blaze in splendour for ever. The trouble is temporary, the gain is everlasting. The winter seems harsh and bitter; it looks like the adversity of the year. But winter is salutary, in the real progress of the year, as summer. In winter noxious and hurtful insects are destroyed, the clods are broken to powder, and the juices of trees are retained about the roots, so that these latter grow. So is it with man. In his wintry states, in sorrow and in suffering, blessings are conveyed to the soul which are of inestimable value. The roots of heavenly virtues grow, and preparations are made for all our subsequent advancement. It has been said, that just so much as the fibres of the root extend in winter will be the progress of the upper part of the tree in summer. And man's mental tree will spread

more fully, and bear a richer harvest of virtues, in proportion as we strike the roots of religion more deeply in meditation, humility, and prayer.

The Israelites must have been often perplexed when going forward and backward in the wilderness. They must have often felt afraid that they would never succeed in reaching their promised destination, in the face of fierce foes, hostile nations, and fearful journeys. It is said of them in the Psalms,—“They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way: they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might find a city of habitation.” Thus, we notice, that however great their trials and deprivations, they were led by the right way. The pillar of cloud, and the pillar of fire, directed them in the course indispensable to their perfect success. It was the right way. And, my beloved hearers, when we enter into the eternal world, many sorrows which now we would fain shun, many struggles which we would fain have been spared, many privations which have seemed to us detrimental, will be found to have been all working their destined amount of discipline and of good. We have, by a merciful hand, been led in the right way, that we might come, at last, to a city of everlasting and all-blissful habitation. Gratefully then, may we add with the Psalmist, “O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.”

Thus may we see how true it is of the good man, “Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” It shall prosper either in what he intends, or in some greater blessing which he does not see now, but he will see hereafter. On the whole subject we may perceive that the correspondence of the tree is as fruitful in lessons of use here, as elsewhere, in the Divine Word. The rule for its spiritual interpretation is precisely the same. Let us, my beloved hearers, ever ask ourselves, are we growing and fruit-bearing trees, or are we mere weeds? Do we bring forth our fruit in due season? Is the fruit mellowed by the inward flavour of grateful acknowledgment to the Lord, that He is the source of this and every good work? Are we diligent cultivators of our spiritual tree, watchful that no destructive influences destroy its beauty or its fruit? Do we yearn for it to grow upwards, heavenwards? And thus seek to realize the blessed promise to the good in our text. His leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. If this be our happy deter-

mination, we shall find that the virtues we are directed to possess in this first psalm, will secure those in all the other psalms.

The first will be seen to contain the germ of all the rest. Nay, not only the first psalm, but the first word of the first psalm, will contain that which will qualify our state, and be the spring, of all real felicity for us in earth and in heaven. "Blessed" is the word which begins the psalm and the book, and this term will truly describe our state. Blessed shall we be in sowing the seed of heavenly faith within us; blessed shall we be in receiving the fruit in his season; blessed shall we be in beholding fresh truths come forth, and old truths with fresh lustre, from the ever-green leaves of ideas growing from the Sacred Word; blessed shall we be, in a child-like confidence, that all we do and all we suffer will be for our perpetual good; blessed shall we be in life; blessed shall we be in death, and blessed shall we be in heaven. We shall experience the divine saying, "The Lord shall guide thee continually, He shall satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."—Isa. lviii. 11.

So may we grow: so may we act: and so may we be blessed.

Finally, let us learn not to be too anxious from an immediate apparent growth of our spiritual tree. One of the most fruitful sources of anxiety and mistake in our spiritual career is, the desire to feel at once, and fully, a state of interior blessedness. Some persons are curiously and painfully prying as to their exact states. But this is incompatible with real faith in the Lord and a pure love of goodness. The growth of a tree in a day is scarcely to be marked: yet it grows. And if the cultivator obeys the laws of vegetable progress the success of the tree is certain. He need not trouble himself to mark each measure of advance. All will, in due time, be well. So is it with us. If we obey the commandments of God from a spirit of love, all within us will grow up and flourish and bear in good time. Let us not be anxious, but obedient; doing our natural duties from spiritual motives, and our spiritual duties faithfully; and we may leave the rest, with child-like confidence, in the hands of the Lord. We know not what the Spirit of the Lord is doing within us. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one who is born of the Spirit." But this we may know, that Divine Mercy will do the best for us that can be done. If we do our part the All-Good will certainly do His.

Let our sole care be to cultivate faithfulness in duty, from an earnest love to the Lord and our neighbour, and a firm faith in the promises of the Divine Word. Then shall we certainly find the truth of the description, in which the Lord said, "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." We shall have our nights and days, our sleepings and wakings, our periods of gloom and of gladness, of shade and of brightness, of chill and of warmth, but let us faithfully obey, whether pleasant or unpleasant, the voice of love, of truth, and of duty, from our Divine Saviour, and we shall find that the tree will grow up, though we know not how. "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God."

SERMON XVI.

WALKING THROUGH THE VALLEY.

"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."—Ps. xxiii. 4.

LIFE is a journey. In the sunny morning of existence we set out and advance by easy stages through the golden mountains of love; we bask in the sun, we run joyously from side to side and gather flowers: we lead a kind of charmed life, caressing all things, and confiding in the love and goodwill of all around us. It is, doubtless, the intention of the Divine Providence, that we should gather in this early stage of life stores of affection, of confidence, of trust, and of encouragement, and happy are they who traverse this part of life's journey with no rude shocks which may give them knowledge of the existence, in their path, of selfishness and sin. As we advance in life, we come to scenes less warm, but bright, beautiful, and varied. We have the love of knowledge; we seek for truths and welcome them. We listen with full faith to all around us. We walk in wonder-land, but its marvels are to us not astonishing. All things come and go, and all our wants are attended to without care, contrivance, or anxiety on our part, and we are ready to receive, nay, are formed to receive, all that the highest truth can tell us of our Heavenly Father, of His unceasing bounty, and His glorious kingdom. Our parents and the good people around us seem loving and disinterested, to come and go wonderfully, and to do wonderful things, and we delight, undoubtingly, in all that we are told of still higher good people, who are invisible to us—the angels. It is our age of faith, and happy are those who are supplied with the food their states demand: who are provided thus early and fully with the conviction expressed in the first verse of this Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."

After a while, however, we come upon lower ground, and walk among sterner scenes. We enter the darker realities of life, and are amazed to find wild beasts begin to appear on our road; we become aware of gloomy jungles; mysterious thickets skirt our road, and sometimes lie before us. Our remembrances of the sunny heights of infancy and childhood become more faint, as the scenes themselves become more distant, and we find often we are walking in a valley; sometimes it is one of deep and awful shade. It is such a valley of which our text speaks. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."

The correspondence of valleys easily suggests itself when we remember the correspondence of mountains. The latter corresponding to high principles within the soul, which are connected with our inmost motives; the former, or the valleys, will correspond to the lower principles of the soul, those which have especially to do with action and with outward life. Such is the correspondence, and such its use in the Word. It was said by the prophet Isaiah, when announcing the Lord's coming into the world, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain."—Isa. xl. 4. The valleys were exalted when men's lives were made better, animated by purer and nobler purposes. The mountains and hills of self-love, and worldly love, which were exalted by pharisaic pride, were laid low when judgment came upon them, and their power over the souls of others was broken by the Saviour God. The crooked were made straight, when men were led to adopt rectitude instead of perversity, straightforwardness for double-dealing: and when the entangled meshes of traditional absurdity were exchanged for the simple precepts of the Gospel, surely the rough places became plain.

An interesting use of valley is made in Psalm lxxxiv.: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."—5—7. The spiritual sense alone enables us to see the force and beauty of a passage like this. Baca is the Hebrew for weeping. The valley of Baca, therefore, means the external affections of the mind in sorrow. The passage declares, therefore, the blessed effect of adversity rightly borne. When our fortunes are a wreck, and our darling dreams have vanished; if amid our tribulations, we learn to prize eternal possessions as the

only sure ones, and go to the Divine Word to seek them, then blessed are we. Perhaps, a beloved child has been called away, and the bruised affections are pouring out their woes in tears. Perhaps the only one has to be sent to herald our path to heaven. The child of our constant love, our daily solicitude, has pined, and died. We strove and prayed, and hoped and feared, and laboured, but all in vain. The ties of earth were too feeble to hold the rising immortal, and we are left to mourn in the valley. We are overwhelmed with grief. We are at first inconsolable. But after the early bursts of sorrow are over, a calm comes over us, and we feel as if it were the presence of the dead raising our attention upward, heavenward, and a secret assurance enters the soul, and intimates, He is risen. Heaven becomes to us more of a real home, since it already contains those who were the charm of our home here. We resolve to become more spiritual, more angel-like. We go to the Holy Word again and again for consolation, and we find it a well whence we can constantly draw the living waters of pure and holy truth. We have gone through the valley of Baca, and made it a well. Of all such it may truly be said, "Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."

In the prophecy of Hosea there is a similar use of the idea of a valley (ii. 15). "I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." The valley of Achor is the valley of trouble. And all our troubles really take place in the natural mind, where spiritually this valley is. Our temptations are there. All our battles against our passions take place there. Our sins and our sorrows are alike experienced in this region of care and disorder. But if we faithfully stand in temptation, struggling manfully and trustingly for the right; heeding neither the whispers of lust, the cravings of covetousness, the violence of passion, nor the hisses of hate; but watch and wait for help from above, to aid us still to walk on the path to heaven, each trouble borne and conquered will become "a door of hope," assuring us of final victory. And with each fresh temptation overcome, we shall sing there, as in the days of our youth; or, in other words, as in the day when we first devoted ourselves to do the Divine will, as in the day when we were first brought out of Egypt. The prophet Jeremiah speaks with a like use of valley. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done."—ii. 23. Thy way in the valley is the evil which they had brought into act. Ezekiel had a vision, which while it is typical in the letter

of the sad political state of the Jews, then enslaved in Babylon, is also the type of the unregenerate man at all times. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about : and, behold, there were very many in the open valley ; and, lo, they were very dry."—xxxvii. 1, 2. A striking representation this of the mind, dead to the holy life of religion, and of heaven. No warm and generous sympathies with virtue and truth are there ; no living activity in goodness is there. The doctrines of religion which would have formed the framework of a new man lie like disjointed bones, in the memory here and there, without life, and very dry. When the soul in this state comes under our notice, and we observe how careless, how heedless it is of its highest interests ; how indifferent to things of the weightiest moment, and only alive to trifles, or to polluted pleasures, which drain up all its energies, we are tempted to exclaim with the sacred speaker, "Can these bones live?" They are very dry. And, if man were left to his own unaided exertions, to improve himself, doubtless it would be impossible to make them live. But the Divine mercy would be over them, and breathe heavenly life into the otherwise motionless mass, and those who were dead become alive again, and those who were lost are found.

But the valley mentioned in our text is said to be the valley of the shadow of death, and some have supposed that the allusion is to the hour and pains of death in the body. It is, however, not so. It is the valley, not of death, but of the shadow of death. Besides, death in the Bible seldom alludes to earthly dissolution. The living death of sin is usually meant by the term death, with its related terms in the Scriptures. The death of the body is not properly death at all. It is but the change of a lower for a higher kind of life. It is but the stripping off of the husk that the grain may come forth. The shell is removed, but the kernel is still uninjured, and is freer for being stripped of its bonds. The covering of man is thrown aside, but the man himself arises, unencumbered by his clay, to display powers before but feebly exerted, because in their swaddling clothes, but now triumphant, for they live in their own element, the world of mind. Oh, no, the death of the body is no real death ; it is but a change, a removal, a throwing off of the clothes worn out in the world, for the enjoyment of new life in a new dress. The messenger of death is, to the good man, only the herald of everlasting life. It is the nuncio of the King of kings who summons us, from our outpost in the wilderness, to return home to the palace. He calls us to

perfections, to joys, and to company, which are all a reward, and a welcome, to the good. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The death that is to be feared, is the death which moral evil inflicts upon the soul. The first time death is mentioned in the Scriptures is where it is said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And that death is undoubtedly spiritual death, for no other death did man suffer that day. "To be carnally-minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. viii. 6. Love is the life of the soul, hatred is its death. All hatred bears within its horrid heart death to the person hated. Indeed, all sin carries death within its bosom. "Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."—James i. 15.

The love of self, which is the antagonist to the life of God in the soul, is essential death. It threatens the destruction of generous and holy emotions in the soul. It craves possessions, pleasures, power, fame, unceasingly, and against all who place obstacles in its path it breathes revenge and war. Such a spirit is in opposition to truth, to order, to the universe; hence it conspires for the death of all these. Hence originate murders, wars, and all those terrible crimes which tend to destroy the human race. Sins are anomalies, unnatural in the universe. They choke up and hinder the divine life wherever they are manifest. Every sin tends to destruction. The wages of sin is death, because the fruit of it is death, and cannot be otherwise. Let any one attempt to conceive a society founded on any evil principle, on universal covetousness for example, and all that is worth calling life would be impossible. Universal sullenness, universal suspicion, universal distrust, universal jealousy, universal hatred, universal rapacity, universal misery would prevail. First, the property, and then the life of each, would be greedily sought by every other, and hence universal destruction would ensue. So would it be in a society where all were thieves. The purpose of each one to take from every other would turn the whole into a herd of malignant plotters, schemers for plunder, and fierce assailants. The wildest struggle, the deadliest cruelty, and universal destruction, would be the result. So would it be with any other evil, for in each one there is the essence of every other, and thus the germ of all hell. Hence it is that the apostle James writes, "that he who offends in one commandment of the law is guilty of all."—Chap. ii. 10. Not that a person who, from weakness, cannot yet yield perfect obedience, is equally guilty in the sight of our Heavenly Father with him who recklessly breaks

all the divine laws: but that he who deliberately breaks one commandment because it suits him, has no love for any, and would break any if it suited his purpose; he is already, in the sight of God, guilty of all. Because death is inherent in sin, in the Word death is spoken of not as passive so much as active. Death shall come up into their dwellings. Death shall feed upon them. "O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction."—Hosea xiii. 14. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin."—1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire."—Rev. xx. 14.

Sin, then, is essential death, and the only death that the good man needs to fear. The kingdom of darkness, where sin in all its horrid forms is wrought out and prevails, is the region of death. One awful absence of all which constitutes true life prevails. There is no powerful purity, no happy innocence, no active disinterested love, no generous self-sacrificing friendship, no active earnest zeal for a neighbour's good, no love of truth, of virtue, or of God. Death lives a horrid kind of life, and all is gloomy and malignant misery. The unhappy beings who live there seek to bring others under their dominion, and hence they approach us, and cast their fearful shades, at times, around us. The gloom they induce is the shadow of death. When we are in it we are in the valley of the shadow of death.

When we reflect that shadows are cast by a dark body coming between the object shadowed and the sun, we shall see, readily, that the shadow of death is the darkening which evil causes in the soul, and which shuts out light from the Sun of the mind.

When evil spirits excite self-love within us, it darkens within us the light and the presence of God. The Psalmist exclaims: "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes" (Ps. xxxvi. 1); where it is clear that there is a temptation described from evil spirits to induce insolence to the Divine Being. This would cause gloom and depression of mind. The pilgrim would walk in the shadow of death. So when discontent sets in upon us, we undervalue all our mercies and blessings. Ten thousand provisions for happiness go for nothing. We have got a speck upon the mental eye, and that shuts out the sun and all his universe. We are in shade and darkness until we remove the speck. Or, perhaps, some tendency to evil desire is stirred up. Some lust or passion is excited, which, for the time, makes a spiritual smoke around us. We lose our clear discernment of the truth. The bright light we once had is hidden in sadness, at the discovery of so

much to lament over. We feel desires which are impure and unholy, but which we can scarcely resist. We look up to the Source of all good, and pray earnestly against the besetting sin, but for a while no help appears. We labour on, still struggling for purity and right, but the darkness thickens upon us; we sink almost to despair. We are then in the valley of the shadow of death. And how well it is to remember and believe, that the Lord is with us! It is dark, and we cannot see Him, but assuredly He is there. This is the hour and the power of darkness. We seem to be alone. The Lord and Master who trod this vale when it was ten thousand times darker than it can ever be with us, said, "I am not alone, but the Father is with me." So it is with us. Our Father is with us; we are not alone. He will not leave us in the hands of our enemies. He will never forsake us, and He is too powerful to be overcome. If we but walk firmly and trustingly we are sure to be triumphant.

"O never sit we down and say,
There's nothing left but sorrow:
We walk the Wilderness to-day,
The promised Land to-morrow."

When the pillar of a cloud no longer leads us, in the night of our distress and darkness the pillar of fire will still be there. The Divine Presence will inspire hope; will inwardly soothe and comfort; and we shall be able to say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."—Ps. xlii. 11.

It will, occur, perhaps, to thoughtful minds, that valleys are more fruitful than mountains, and yet their correspondence is to lower principles in the mind. Mountains represent exalted affections, valleys the lower determinations, which are visible in life and conduct. In the valleys growth, fertility, and richness, are chiefly found, and not on the mountain-tops; but, nevertheless, all which makes the valley fruitful owes its origin to the mountains. Without mountains there would be no rivers; even the soil which forms the rich bottom in which the heavy-laden fruit-trees grow, is brought down by winds and rills from the mountain sides, and settles in the hollows at their feet. So is it in the Christian's mind. It is in his life that the fruits of his religion are manifest. There are his virtues seen. But all that enables him to be actively good, just, and true, is from within. The exalted sentiments which unite him to God and heaven, the high aspirations for the holy and the pure, the intense yearnings after the divine likeness, which distinguish the real Christian, these,

with the wisdom that streams from above, are the powers within to which all the virtues of character, the fruits of the mental valleys, owe their rise. Principles, like mountain-tops, are bare themselves, but they are the great sources of abundant benefits and blessings in their results. They really make the valleys smile.

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.”

It is well to notice, that sorrow itself is not an evil. It may, in its purifying effects, be to us a great good. Temptation is not an evil, but is the only way by which we can come at the knowledge of ourselves, and of the evil tendencies within us. Nothing is an evil, but a disorderly impulse, which we make our own by practice. Though, therefore, we may be enveloped for a time in darkness, we need fear no evil so long as we trust in the Lord. The evil stirred up in us we can remove. The evil suggested to us we can reject. “We will fear no evil, for thou art with us.”

One thing, however, we must not omit to notice. We must walk through the valley. We must not willingly stop, nor must we turn back, but walk on, and walk through the valley. In other words, we must continue to live according to the commandments of the Lord, for this is to walk. Our prayer should ever be that we may be kept still doing our duty. “O let me not wander from thy commandments.” And we are promised that this shall be the case. There is a beautiful declaration in Isaiah to this effect. “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”—Chap. xxx. 20, 21. Sometimes this walking on will be very difficult, and very threatening, but we must fearlessly persevere. Terrible scenes are often manifested to the soul in temptation. The lusts and passions, like wild beasts, are excited in fearful energy. We had supposed, in the earlier part of our journey, because the Lord had in mercy restrained and hid them from us, that they no longer existed. But now we find it is far otherwise. They were muzzled and overawed, but not exterminated. They are raging with fury, excited from hell. They are the lions and serpents which prowl and creep in the dark valley. Often will our experience be like that described by David: “My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp

sword."—Ps. lvii. 4. But in all this fearful struggle we must still keep a firm and lively faith in the presence, power, and protection, of our great Saviour. The Psalmist continues, after describing his terrible position: "Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth."—Ver. 5. And such must be our confiding, courageous exclamation,— "Though the powers of evil surround and fiercely threaten us, be thou exalted, O God. Though they would induce me to think I am forsaken, and there is no help, yet will I trust in thee. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me; for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast."

While, at some times, fiery passions sorely try us, like beasts of fiery breath: at others, deep and raging waters of false principles have to be faced, struggled through, and passed. Persuasions full of malignant fallacy come on and on, like terrible waves, across our path, and forbid our advance. We go on, however, in spite of them, but are at times nearly overwhelmed. Often the internal assault is accompanied by the reasonings of associates in business or in society, which advance and retail pernicious notions, vile, blasphemous, and intolerable. This is especially so, often in the large workshops of the manufacturing population. The spirits of young men are sorely tried. There are their own hereditary impulses inclining them to evil, and to those false ideas which favour evil. There are scoffers at hand sneering at everything sacred, and exulting in impurity; there are cunning reasoners for wrong sedulously seeking to undermine every just and virtuous principle; and, withal, a persevering prolongation of these varied attacks, until the spirit well nigh fails, and cries out, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in upon my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary: my throat is dried, mine eyes fail while I wait for my God."

Such are some of the awful experiences of the dark valley; not unfrequently increased by worldly disappointments and sorrows; failures in business prospects, and destruction of earthly hopes; yet there is no need for despair: the Lord is with His servants in their gloomiest hours, and His grace is sufficient for them.

Happy is it for those who have early learned that such trials will come, and are prepared to meet them with the confidence expressed in our text. "Yea, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

A friend of mine was once brought into the deepest gloom on the subject of the Divine character of the Lord Jesus. The human necessities He condescended to assume, when He truly assumed our nature, were so pressed upon my friend's mind. The Saviour's growing, eating, drinking, sleeping, weeping, seemed, for the time, the only things of which he could think. The gloom continued and deepened. Ideas of the Saviour's size, of His sorrows, and of His death, hemmed him closely round, and there appeared no escape from the conclusion that we had only a human Redeemer. Still this was struggled against by my friend; proofs to the contrary were wished for, looked for, but nothing came: only the conviction remained deep in the soul, that the Divinity of the Saviour had been seen in days gone by: that the deepest assurance had been obtained that Infinite Love had embodied itself in human sorrows for the redemption of the universe, and had laid hold of our humanity, and raised and glorified it in Himself, for the perpetual restoration of fallen men in all ages. This he had seen, but it only remained as a heartfelt conviction to which he clung; he could not see it now. He prayed for help, and looked and looked, and trusted for it, and slowly but surely it came. There darted amidst the gloom, like a flash of light, the divine words of the Lord Jesus Himself—"All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth."—Matt. xxviii. 18. Then a succession of declarations were opened upon him. The promises of Jehovah, again and again, that He would save mankind, and there was no Saviour beside Him: the declaration, at the Lord's birth, that He was God manifest in the flesh: the displays of creative power in His miracles shewing, on the sea and on the land, that the Lord of Nature was there: the declarations of the Gospel and of the book of Revelations, announcing that He was the Father as well as the Son, the First as well as the Last, all shed a flood of light around the tried one's mind; and now the darkness entirely fled, and he felt that his Father and Saviour had been with him and succoured him at the right time; and with greater confidence than ever, he could say, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

Often we are brought into the dark valley by family afflictions. A child whom we have fondly loved, and carefully nurtured, is a victim of painful and slow disease. We have been alarmed by attacks of a serious nature; we have, however, laboured, and with apparent success, for improved health; and again we rejoice in the beloved one's recovered strength, the manifestation of distinguished talents, and of all those amiable

qualities which the daily virtues of a religious youth disclose. We forget the fears and pains of the past, and are rejoicing in the present and the future, when again the insidious destroyer appears, and again our beloved one suffers, and we recognize a similarity to the former painful symptoms. A suspicion flits across the mind that a fatal disorder lurks there. But we strive against it, and the disease again seems mastered. We hope, but tremblingly, that all is now right, and again are delighted with the progress, both in mind and body, of the object of our care. For a time nothing disturbs us; but at length come fresh attacks, with increased virulence. We put forth fresh exertions; we persevere; alternately hope and fear rise uppermost; at length the loved one, perhaps the only one, dies, and we feel the hope of our life blighted. We are alone and lorn. No wonder that darkness comes round us, and we sometimes find ourselves muttering discontent, and believe that no sorrow is like our sorrow. Yet the Lord is surely with us. It is our natural state that makes our bereavement seem so hard. The loved one is not lost, but gone before. In a little time, consolation manifests the presence of the Divine Comforter. We are turned to think how long we have enjoyed the blessing of an angel in the house, rather than too deeply to repine at the loss now sustained. The thought comes down, Is he not safe from shipwreck? Shall we not certainly find him in heaven? What a blessing it is that we have seen our flower sown, reared, early matured, and transplanted to paradise! Is it not much better that the cherished object of our affections should have gone before, and be ready to welcome us to heaven, than to be left struggling with a diseased and feeble frame, with the harsh necessities of a selfish world, and be left by us far from confident that he will be either naturally or spiritually victorious? Ah, no, it is well.

"The vernal flower, by early blight
Expires, to bloom again no more;
But youth's fair blossom snatched from sight,
Blooms fairer on a happier shore.

"What solace for parental love!
What antidote to dark dismay!
To know life's closing scene shall prove
The herald of eternal day!"

So in this dark valley the Lord is with us, and will be ever with us. Happy, thrice happy are they who have learned this sacred faith, this hallowed trust, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Shades we shall have to pass through, many, and some very gloomy. Yet fear not; our Almighty Friend and

Helper will be with us, and fulfil His own assurance. "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."—Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

The divine text goes on to say, "Thy rod (shehvet) and thy staff (mishgehne) they comfort me." There are here marked two sources of comfort, the rod and the staff. As comfort can only be imparted to the mind, the allusion will be to such appliances as afford comfort to the mind. These are furnished in the Holy Word. It comprehends, therefore, both the rod and the staff. The spirit of the Word is the rod, the letter of the Word is the staff. The rod is an instrument for the hand. It is used to direct, and is the symbol of power. It is the word commonly rendered sceptre, and is the symbol of royalty. The staff is a support to assist the feet in walking, and is the symbol of truth, as applied to the daily life. The spirit of the Word is to its letter as a king is to a subject, or as a sceptre to a staff.

The rod plays a very important part in various portions of the sacred volume. The rod of Moses is introduced on the occasion of every miracle. It represented the power of divine truth employed in saving the good, and manifesting the evils and false principles of the wicked.

Because divine truth in its interior brightness and beauty reigns in the true kingdom of the Lord, it is said, "The sceptre (shehvet) of thy kingdom is a right sceptre."—Isa. xlv. 6. The rule of truth from love is the only government acknowledged by the Lord as true. "The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." "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 (shehvet) of His mouth."—Isa. xi. 4. The rod or sceptre of His mouth must undoubtedly mean His divine truth. "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old."—Micah vii. 14. Where under the image of bringing his flock from the western woods to the rich mountains of the east, Bashan and Gilead, the desire of the Lord is expressed, that His people should be elevated from the perplexities of a low earthly state, to the sublime wisdom of a heavenly one. To be fed with the rod, means to receive the directing and exalting lessons of sacred truth, and spiritually to live upon them.

The rod or sceptre represents the power of the spiritual sense

of the Word, and is the highest source of comfort. The staff as a support to assist the feet, corresponds to the power of the literal sense of the Word, rightly understood, to aid man in his daily life, to help him to walk. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—Ps. cxix. 105. To be a lamp unto the feet, is to illuminate and direct us in our daily conduct. To be a staff to the feet, is to strengthen us in the right, in every transaction of life. This attention to the feet is often overlooked in the religious life, yet it is of the highest importance. Without that we are attempting to raise an everlasting pyramid without a base: we are building a house without a foundation, and it can be nothing but a visionary fabric. The true Christian is therefore directed in the Sacred Volume, and especially in the Psalms, to be ever mindful of his feet. "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net."—Ps. xxv. 15. Where it is obvious, that to pluck the feet from the net, is to deliver the life from the meshes of a false and corrupt system. "Thou hast set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."—Ps. xl. 2. "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living?" O that this were the prayer of every professing Christian; to walk before the Lord; to have the feet preserved from falling. Many there are who are careful to make their heads religious, but totally neglect the feet. This is, however, emphatically our part. By means of the feet we make progress. And if we watch well our practical daily life, we shall find how prone we are there to act a part unworthy of our Christian profession. We shall often have mournfully to say, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked."—Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3. Still, if we are true to our principles, look earnestly to our Divine Helper, and pray sincerely for His aid, we shall be preserved from falling in the hour of danger, and we shall be able gratefully to take up the language of the Christian conqueror: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."—Ps. cxvi. 7—9.

To aid us when we are weak and weary, the Lord has given us a staff, in His Divine Word. There we have every direction how to proceed, and constant strength afforded us. It is a staff on which we can lean. In the beautiful description of the church,

in the prophet Zechariah, such as it would be in the future, it is described as "Jerusalem, a city of truth; the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain;" and it is written, "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age."—viii. 3, 4. To have the staff in the hand, means to be well sustained and strengthened by the letter of the Word, so as to have for every duty, and every state, a direction from divine truth, a "Thus saith the Lord." In such case, our weakness is made strong, our doubts are dissipated, and where we hesitated and trembled, we feel the everlasting arms around us. The rod and the staff of Jehovah, they comfort us.

And, now, what a beautiful feature of the hallowed Word, both of its spirit and of its letter, is that which is presented before us, "They comfort us." And this is the real purpose of both its divine senses. The whole Word is intended to comfort. It is Divine Love, drawn out, and especially calculated to kindle love to God above all things, and to our neighbour as ourselves. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

What is so great a source of comfort as to know that God is Love? And this the whole spirit of the Word unfolds. From Love He desired to create immortal beings, that He might bless them. This world, with its countless varieties of bounty and of beauty, this universe of innumerable worlds, is the grand school where Love places its children to be trained and taught. Down all the myriad forms of creation Infinite Love pours its life, and light, and blessing. Oh, what a comfort it is to be assured of this. "The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."—Ps. cxlv. 9. What gratuitous discomfort do they cause themselves, who do not credit this great, this gracious truth! "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Do we feel at times uncertain of the Divine mercy? Does our changing nature suggest the uneasy idea that perhaps He also has changed, and become forbidding and vindictive? The Word unfolds the answer. Our Creator is our Saviour. He has been our unchanging Preserver and Redeemer. Almighty Love followed His erring children to reclaim and save them. All good men and all good angels are made His instruments for man's salvation. The spirit of the Word unfolds throughout men's declensions and God's mercies. I cannot find in myself an evil, but in the Scriptures are the means unfolded by which Omnipotent Love and Wisdom have overcome that, and are

willing to overcome it in me; while the letter of the Word loudly and distinctly proclaims, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The Word unfolds to us our spiritual nature, and our relation to the spirit-world. It opens to us the mystery of those alternations of joy and sorrow, brightness and gloom, pain and peace, which come over us, independent of the outer world. And when I am conscious of awe and dread at the idea of beings unseen, influencing my states and feelings, I am comforted by the disclosures of the whole of Revelation, that angels are all assisting me up the ladder of spiritual progress, at whose summit is the Lord, the Director of the whole. Evil spirits are only suffered to operate to produce the highest eventual good for those who love the divine commandments. Under Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, all things are working together for those who love God. "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The Word, too, opens to my delighted gaze my relation to the everlasting home of the good, the pure, and the great of all ages, Heaven. This is my spirit's home. To prepare for this, is the object of all my training, all my struggles. For this I must be born again. For this have I been born at all. All the circumstances of my life have been ordained or permitted as they have had a beneficial bearing on my unending career in heaven. And what a glorious world it is that is opened to the wondering soul. All those who have loved the good and the true, for the sake of the good and the true, perfected to their highest capability, and arranged in a spiritual world, where all is so plastic, from their own forms to all the innumerable objects by which this more perfect sphere of things is enriched, by the inexhaustible beneficence of infinite goodness, that it reflects exactly the perfections and beauties of the heavens within them. What glorious forms their pure, loving, dignified souls will have generated! What scenes of paradise will exist as correspondences of the inner excellencies, where every soul is a paradise. What gems will glitter around, where every soul has sought the goodly pearls of heaven's own wisdom. All that is magnificent and grand on earth must there be immeasurably surpassed, for though all ideas of art and beauty come from that inner world to us, we receive them so faintly, and unfold them so imperfectly at the best, that all we have of beauty here must only feebly indicate the boundless loveliness of heaven. And when we say love reigns there, the spirit willing only the happiness of others, we give the principle from which comes all delight.

Truly then, may we say of the spirit and letter of the Word, which unfold to us these blessed realities, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

All the trials and troubles of earth become as nothing when we see they are to terminate in an everlasting abode in joys and scenes like these. Why need I care that I am to suffer a cross, when it is the way to so glorious a crown? Welcome the fire that purifies my gold! Welcome the storm that clears my mental air! Welcome the temporal trials which hallow, and soften, and sanctify my affections, and draw them upwards! "At thy right hand there is fulness of joy, even life for evermore."

It is a comfort inestimable that God has spoken to us, and given us a revelation of His will. We look around in Nature and are astonished at its silent grandeur, its stupendous majesty, but it is silent. We ask its meaning, but no answer comes. It gives no account even of itself, much less of its Maker and its Maker's gracious intentions. Only by man can nature speak, even of physical objects. When we examine her diligently, ideas come into our minds concerning her, but not from her. Nature cannot give what she has not got, and she has no ideas. She has only physical objects. Ideas come into our minds from the spiritual world, from that "true Light which enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world."—John i. 9. These ideas correspond to Nature, but come not from her. And, if Nature cannot be unfolded except through men, much more is it the case that God's will and wisdom can only be declared through men, inspired for the purpose. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Spirit of the Highest. And thus we have Revelation. And blessed be the Divine mercy, it is a sceptre to rule us, a staff to sustain us. May it for ever be to us a guide and a support. Especially shall we find it essential to us when we are in the gloom of affliction or temptation, "the valley of the shadow of death." And by its counsels we shall ever come safely through. And taking up the triumphant language with which the psalm concludes, we shall be able to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

SERMON XVII.

BEING LIFTED FROM THE PIT.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord."—Ps. xl. 1.

THE human mind is a wonderful thing; it became the custom of the benighted philosophers of the last century to represent it to be as nearly like nothing as possible. Instead of looking at it from its own wonderful principles, powers, and qualities as seen in themselves, and revealed by the workings of the soul in its own sphere, and in the wonders of social, domestic and scientific life, they looked at it from the properties of matter. They asked for its material bulk, weight, and tangible parts; and as they could not find these palpable to their outward senses, they concluded that it was fine as breath, and small as a formless atom. Strange and vain delusion! To ask matter what spirit is, is not so reasonable as to attempt to judge of light by the ears, or the world of harmony by the smell. The world of light, though real and marvellously glorious to the eyes, is nothing to any other sense: the universe of sound, though including all the marvels of speech, and all that music and discord can impart, yet to the taste, the touch, the eyes, the smell, it is nothing at all. Each sphere of existence, though comprising innumerable wonders and beauties, speaks only to the sense appropriate for its observation. So is it with the soul. It must be examined not by the body, but by itself, and its own senses. Let a person feel for his soul with his material hand, and he will not find it, but let him notice his thoughts within, and he will observe there multitudes of affections, desires, feelings, sentiments, emotions, purposes and principles of action. There are also plainly manifest to every one's experience, masses of science and knowledge within the soul, ideas erroneous or true, intellectual views, and wise determinations. All these form an inner man, living in a world of his own, and connected

with a grander world of all spiritual beings. Or if the soul is degraded, it is an inner monster living amidst distorted images, perverse imaginings, and vile impurities, acting upon others, and being acted upon by its like. The soul is an inner being, living now obscurely in an inner universe, but hereafter broadly and openly; its states are not those of the body, but they correspond to those of the body; its world is not the world of nature, but it corresponds to the world of nature. Sometimes it stands on the mountains of glowing emotion, and gratefully gazes on the Lord, the Sun of the eternal world. Sometimes it walks upon the plain of direct principle, sometimes it is busy in the valley of earthly cares and pursuits, and sometimes it sinks into a pit. And this last is the state treated of in the subject before us. "Thou hast brought me," says the Psalmist, "out of a horrible pit." Let us enquire, then, what is meant by being in a pit, and next, what by being brought out of it.

A person in a pit, especially if it is a deep pit, is confined, depressed, chilled, and imprisoned. The soul is in a pit when it sees but little out of itself, is discouraged in temptation, harassed, cast down, and miserable; when it sees little brightness, little hope, scarcely anything, but is surrounded by its own troubles, perplexities and fears, which are to it a pit. Occasionally, this sad condition will continue long, and gather vexation. A wearisome time of straitness and bitterness will set in. We look before and behind, but there is no opening. Our own sad thoughts and harassing suggestions from without are our only companions. It seems as if no man cared for our souls.

This correspondence of being in a pit is often employed in the Divine Word, and easily recognized in human experience. Who has not been in states of depression and distress, in which a chill cold atmosphere is around the spirit, and it feels narrowed in its views and impressions, confined for comfort only to memory and hope, and surrounded by false suggestions in thousands? This is to be in the pit, and to have the soul in prison. "O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit."—Ps. xxx. 3. "For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul."—Ps. xxxv. 7. Here the snare of falsehood is likened to the net placed in a pit to entrap an animal in the forest. At other times, the pit is represented as almost closing itself over the imprisoned and infested soul, as if only a little light descended through the aperture overhead. "Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her

mouth upon me.”—Ps. lxxix. 15. And, when we have been the subjects of continued sorrow and infestation, our hopes defeated, our prospects blighted, and plans unblessed with success, our best efforts unavailing, while prosperous vice intrudes itself incessantly upon our notice, painful doubts of the Divine justice, mercy, and providence straiten our minds, but very little light comes down to us. These distressing states are more deeply felt by those who are most interiorly desirous of coming into the order of heaven. They seek in every thought and every sentiment to be in harmony with God, and to think worthily of Him. But when bowed down in temptation by unworthy ideas which they cannot drive away, their pain of mind is intense, and they cry out, “My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down to the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.”—Psalm lxxxviii. 4, 6. None but God, and the heart itself, can know the bitter agony which is experienced: it is as though it were caged in hell. False and gloomy views of itself and of all things surround it, and sometimes it becomes weary of life itself.

These states occur with every sincere soul, and are severe in proportion to the genuine character of our conversion, and the purity of our religious principles. A person of flippant, unreflecting character, who hears something glibly uttered about salvation, by believing this or that which the preacher utters, readily accepts it, believes as he thinks accordingly, and supposes very complacently that all is right with him. Though he is steeped in spiritual pride, he is not aware of it; though he is too selfish to give a single practical thought for the good of others, he never suspects that any thing is wrong with him; though he is full of bigotry and fierce sectarianism towards those who in any wise differ from him, he never suspects that he is not a man after God’s own heart. He does not unfold the windows of his soul to the light of heaven, and therefore he cannot see the dust of its dark and narrow chambers. Were he tried as stronger Christians are, he would be swept by the dark flood to utter perdition. Such a person often takes up with the pleasing phantasy that he is one of an especial few, the elect of God, the special favourites of a capricious deity who singled out, and preserved them from no purpose more reasonable than that he would. But men of deeper thought and more conscientious self-knowledge are very different. They aim to be what the Gospel invites them to be. They will not deceive themselves with the fancy that they have virtues

which they have not, or have not faults which they have. They see their failings and their sins, and mourn over them deeply. They find their sins do not vanish for mere wishing; they must will, and work to remove them. They cannot believe they are removed while they are still there. They are earnest with themselves, faithful with themselves. They are gentle and sympathizing with others, but they never spare themselves. These are the persons who find difficulties, who labour, who fall down in discouragement, and cry to the Lord for help. They obtain help, and make some progress, but again temptations come on. They long to be like their Lord and Saviour; they find they are not so, but they pray, and strive and mourn, and pant for purer states, and holier habits. Then come on periods of despondency, a sense of being forsaken of God. It appears to them that they are more tried than others are. They do not see why it should be so, and hence come suggestions of doubt respecting the Lord's care, and love and justice; and when the darkness thickens, there come fearful dark dreams of the possibility of chance or necessity ruling the world; of there being no truth in revelation, no truth in a hereafter. Then will sometimes follow a weariness of life, a loss of hope, a fearful sinking lower and lower to utter darkness, and if the person has been one educated in the idea that some are incapable of salvation, not unfrequently this horrid falsehood presses heavily then, and he trembles on the verge of insanity, and sometimes utterly sinks there.

In such a state, it is said Cowper had been even to the brink of despair when he composed the beautiful hymn :—

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

He had, however, found help at the most fearful moment of mental agony, and hence he could write these verses full of comfort :—

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

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust his constant grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

The pit in our text is called a horrible pit. The term horrible is hardly as definite as the original word would warrant. It is, strictly, a pit of noise. It is a word which implies the tumult, alarm, and crash of an assailing army. It is thus an intimation of the bitter and malicious infestation of evil spirits in our temptations. They infuse slanders against God; they rail at our faith and our virtue; they suggest that we are altogether corrupt and condemned: that our faith has been fancy, our religion a delusion, our heaven a dream. These are continued with a frightful reality and perseverance, until the spirit becomes conscious almost of the personal presence of the tormenting fiends. Most likely the visions of Luther in the castle of Wartzburg, in which he assures us he saw and heard the spirits of darkness, were only a very strong form of this interior temptation—the pit of noise. The whole kingdom of darkness is called “the bottomless pit,” because the infernals are in states of confirmed falsehood from confirmed evil. In them, therefore, are engendered new fallacies, and denser lies without end. When a person in this world loves darkness rather than light, he is ever fertile in delusive reasonings. There is no end of ingenious excuses, and justifications of the worst vices which he can furnish. And so it is with such spirits in the eternal world. They immerse themselves in false persuasions, deep, dark, frowning, and horrible. This gives rise to the position they occupy in that world by correspondence. It is an awful pit. Because of their persistence in the falsehoods they love, their understandings having become the everlasting slaves of their wills, they go deeper and deeper in folly, delusions, and deceptions. Theirs is a bottomless pit. When the soul in its sorrows is exposed to their fearful tempting influences, it is brought in a less degree it is true, but with a fearful vividness under their sphere, like a lurid cloud. Their noise, their persuasions, their insolence, and their reproaches attack it on every side. There is indeed a partial connexion opened with hell. They entice, they persuade, they inject doubts, they harass, and at last they mock, deride, and insult, and this with a cruel obstinacy. This is the pit of noise, the pit of misery, the horrible pit. The only shield for the tried one, in cases like these, is the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked, and the only temper which ensures a victory is patience. “I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit.” With faith, with patience, and prayer, the conflict will assuredly end, and end in victory. The soul will come out of its pit, as out of hell itself, and express

the feeling uttered by the Psalmist: "I will praise the Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell."

The Psalmist speaks of being delivered also from the miry clay. And by this language is designated the pollution of the unregenerate heart. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these things come from within, and defile the man."—Mark vii. 21—23.

The miry clay, natural impurity, is the image of defiled tendencies and feelings, which is spiritual impurity. The awful pollution of our fallen nature no language can adequately describe. It is veiled from our view in infancy by the goodness implanted in our nature by the Lord. It comes out somewhat in the passions of youth. But its full manifestation is only beheld in the worst dens of infamy, and the interior discoveries of man to himself, which take place in the unveiling of temptation. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," said the prophet: "who can know it?"—Jer. xvii. 9. Few read the pages of their own heart under the light of heavenly wisdom; but those who do, shudder at themselves. The imagination of the sensual voluptuary reeks with pollution. It is an Augean stable which nothing can cleanse but the river of Divine Truth. When we dig through the wall of outward decency, without which society could not subsist, we find now what the prophet found, "Every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall round about."—Eze. viii. 10. But the impurities of the imagination are still far surpassed by the depths of pollution which are contained in the lusts of the fallen will itself. Their direful character is, of infinite mercy, only exposed to the Christian when he has strength to bear it; but he learns then by the successive sad revelations which disclose man's vileness to himself, that the most impure of the impurities the universe contains is the uncleansed human heart. Avarice, and its constant attendant sensuality, which gloats in grossness, are represented in the Scriptures by the swine and its filthy habits. Hypocrisy and its impurity are portrayed by the whited sepulchre full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. Dead bodies with their corruptions are the types of dead souls with their defilements. Only partially and by degrees is man made conscious of his own defiled selfhood.—

"Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings but Himself,
That hideous sight—a naked human heart."

When, however, he is strong enough to do some of the work of abhorring, subduing, and expelling sin from its hidden recesses, then comes interior temptation. Then he is shewn the miry clay; then, filled with horror at himself, he cries to Him whom he feels to be the only Saviour: "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters." He would rush affrighted away, but he cannot. He must read the lesson that teaches him to deny himself, and lean upon his Saviour. He must learn to abhor his corrupt nature, and receive a new heart and a right spirit from his Regenerator. He knows now why it is said, "Ye **MUST** be born again." He waits, therefore, humbly and patiently, but longingly for the redeeming hand which can alone raise him from the **MIRY CLAY**, and make him pure in heart.

We must not quit this part of the subject without noticing the wonderful mercy of our Heavenly Father and Saviour, who tempers our trials to our strength. When we turn from evil, at first we see only those gross forms of sin which are easily marked, and not so difficult to renounce. We march out of Egypt, and cross the Red Sea of those opinions, customs, and false maxims, which form the boundary between vice and virtue. We renounce the grossness of wickedness, and we sing the song of victory. We suppose that all we have to do is to make good our ground, and never return to our old state. We are grateful and happy. We imagine that if the pearly gates of paradise were to be opened before us, we should have nothing to do but to walk in, and be everlastingly blessed. The Israelites thought they should soon reach the promised land when they commenced their march, but it was forty struggling years, and after many changes, that their hopes were crowned with success. The first generation died in the wilderness, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, before Canaan was entered and possessed. So it is with us; we suppose the work is done, when it is only commenced. The Lord favours us in this; He gives us His sanction and blessing; He permits us to be encouraged by this feeling, and the angels rejoice with us, and welcome us to their glorious company. How beautifully and cheeringly this is represented in the parable of the returning prodigal: "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." —Luke xv. 20. While "he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." Our Divine Father sees the first movement of con-

trition, and while we are yet very far off: while we are very far off in thought, and sentiment, and feeling, and purity, He still comes forward, and gives us the encouraging kiss of His divine benediction, and says to his angelic servants: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."—Luke xv. 22—24.

But notwithstanding this welcome, much still remains to be done; and when we are strong enough to bear it, the Lord permits us gradually to come into trials; first gentle, then severe, gradually encreasing in difficulty until by little and little the full deep depravity of our corrupt nature is revealed to us. The horrible pit and the miry clay come full into view, and our heartfelt prayer is that the All-good will save us from ourselves, and create in us a new heart and a right spirit.

" All my powers may thy wisdom prepare,
Against my corruptions to fight;
O make me resigned to Thy care,
For Thy dispensations are right!
And since of myself I am weak,
My soul with Thy influence fill;
And be when I act and I speak
The spring of my thoughts and my will."

To come, however, to these states of trial and complete deliverance, patience is needed. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry."

The want of patience is the cause of many a failure. No virtue is a surer forerunner of success than patience. We often have to lament for too great hurry, but never for too much patience. This is especially the case in spiritual things. We wish to be perfect, but we wish for perfection all at once. We wish to be delivered quickly from sin. We desire to be rid of our troubles as shortly as possible, not reflecting that freedom from pain, unless at the same time we are free from the evil, would be a short-lived benefit. "It is good for a man that he hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord," said the prophet; and here in our text it is written, "I waited patiently." This celestial virtue of patience is the source of inestimable blessings. Patience alone can bring any work to perfection; so said St. James: "Let patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."—Chap. i. 4. "In patience possess ye your souls," said the Lord. And if this glorious virtue were always cherished, we should succeed much oftener than we do. As it is, after many failings, through tribulation we

learn patience. From toils, and experience we obtain patience, and patience is crowned at all times by complete deliverance. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined his ear unto me, and heard my cry."

"'Tis patience, the beloved of heaven! the meek
The mild, the lowly, and the gentle patience
Whose eye looks up to God; and ne'er unbends
Its fixed and placid gaze to look upon
The thorns that tear her bleeding breast: who stands
Pale, calm, unmoved amid the storms of life:
Whose soul weeps not for heart's torture, patience,
The meek-eyed pilgrim of the earth, that child
Of heaven—perfection's crown."

Let us, my beloved hearers, never forget this inestimable virtue—patience. By it the husbandman watches and tends the seed until it ripens into the golden grain. Though he wait for it long, it surely comes. By patience, time brings a balm for every sorrow. By patience, the load of impurity which composed the old man is subdued and removed, and the new man grows up to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus. Are you suffering, then, my beloved friend?—have patience. Are you longing to be entirely freed from everything that can impede your spiritual growth and happiness?—have patience. By patient diligence, all that is rough now will be polished, and you will acquire a brilliancy and a beauty which will be fully known in the day that the Redeemer makes up His jewels.

The text continues: "And set my feet upon a rock." Here the correspondence appears in a striking form. Feet, the lowest portion of the body, representing the operative energies which are exhibited in the outward life; these are the lowest affections of the soul. This correspondence of feet appears everywhere in the Word, and we readily perceive its cogency. It was said of Asher by Moses, "Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil;" where it is easy to see, that what is commanded to Asher is, that he should be gentle in heart, and gentle in act. Some persons who mean well, defeat their own kind intentions by the rude and repulsive manner with which they act to others. They do not dip their foot in oil. True Christian courtesy is such a sweetness in demeanour, that a kind action is made doubly kind by the earnest tenderness with which it is done. Even a refusal in such a spirit is deprived of ungraciousness. The oil of heavenly charity is admired by all when it flows down into all the daily acts of common life: when not only the heart, but the foot also is dipped in oil. In this book of Psalms, the foot is very frequently indeed appearing as the correspondence of

the outward life. Thus in the ninety-first, "For He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."—Verses 11, 12. Where to dash the foot against a stone is to impair our daily life by some false and spurious teaching. "For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me."—Ps. xxxviii. 16. The truly good man desires to be preserved in a blameless life, not only for his own sake, but that no harm may come to the cause of religion on his account. He prays that the evil may not have cause to exult through any fault in him: for if his foot should slip, they would magnify themselves against him. "When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up."—Ps. xciv. 18. Here the constant watchfulness and constant prayerfulness of the good man in daily life is manifested. He feels that he needs the Divine Helper to prevent him from failing in some duty, or from falling into some misconduct, and the interior quiet prayer of the heart goes up, "O Lord, my foot slippeth," and the strength of heaven descends, and the sinking spirit is sustained. This religion of the feet is of far greater importance than many suppose. For want of sound feet, religion can often neither stand, nor walk, and yet many dream that they will be saved by their faith, whatever their life may be. But it is not so. The feet must be regulated by the principles of justice and judgment, or there is no safety for the soul. The Word says, "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

O let us, my beloved hearers, as members of the New Jerusalem, never forget that our feet should be within her gates. We must do justly, as well as will and think justly. It is only thus religion becomes real, and stands upon solid ground. At first, when we become religious, we do not admit this truth in all its force. We are more intent upon seeing the truth than upon doing it. We say, as Peter said to the Saviour, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Our daily acts seem to us beneath the dignity of our sublime views. But if we are earnestly seeking to be right, we shall hear the Divine Master saying, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." Every act is the outbirth of good, or of evil, and is fraught with salvation or destruction; it is the ally either of heaven or of hell. When, therefore, the deep fountains of impurity within us are opened to our gaze, and, after a patient endurance, the temptation has passed by, with our lives more firmly grounded in what is good and true than before, how gratefully we can say, "Thou hast set

my feet upon a rock ; thou hast confirmed me in right ; thou hast given me power to stand against the excitements of evil ; my life shall now more than ever be based on the Word of God, which is the Rock of Ages."

What a difference is implied between the confident safety now attained, and the horrors from which the soul has escaped. It is depicted in our text by the picture of a person in a pit of miry clay, dark and horrid, with confused noises of terrible foes around, and seeking destruction, and then the same person delivered from his miserable position, brought out into the sunlight, and placed upon a rock. Lately all was threatening and awful, now all is free and gladsome. Then all was slippery, now all is solid. Then danger lurked everywhere, now all is calm, secure, and certain. "Thou hast set my feet upon a rock."

Every temptation in which we have been victorious makes us stronger. The virtue we have struggled for becomes more completely ours. Principles which have stood the test of seducing influences and urgent assaults, become confirmed and established as settled habits. This is expressed by the Psalmist in the next sentence: "Thou hast established my goings." Our steps are made firm. The effect of temptation properly met and resisted is most salutary, not only in leading to a steadier grasp of the virtues which have been endangered, but to a firmer trust in the Divine Providence. An army that has not met its foes is diffident, and without the steady confidence of veteran troops. So is it with the soul in its spiritual conflicts. When we have endured temptation, we know what we can bear, and what we can resist. We have been tried, and not found wanting. We have acquired new abhorrence of evil, from the very odiousness with which it has pressed itself upon us. We have been into the depths of iniquity, and we know how vile they are. But we have also acquired fresh faith in the Lord. We know that though He seemed long in manifesting His power, it came at last, and we have seen that His was the right time. Our foes have been scattered ; our heads have been lifted up. "Peace, be still," was uttered, and all our fears were hushed. Like the calm sunshine after rain, the presence of the Lord has gone forth like the morn. Hitherto has the Lord helped us, and we set up our stone of testimony, as the Israelites at Ebenezer, and feel assured that the same kind and victorious hand will be outstretched for us in every future danger. "The Lord is my light, and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?"

The Divine Word adds, "And He hath put a new song in

my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

Well does praise become the mouth, when deliverance so signal has been experienced. The whole heart should melt itself in song. Praise unto our God is the grateful expression of the delivered soul, for experience has taught the sacred truth that God is our Saviour and Friend, and the powers of evil are our only enemy. There is a mistaken theology which attributes man's danger to God, and says, there is a second Divine Person, who is the Saviour. But no, says the Scripture: "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else."—Isa. xlv. 22. It is not God we are to be saved from; He is the Saviour Himself, and the only Saviour. Evil and hell are the sources of danger. "God is our help; God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble;" or, as the French version with great simplicity and beauty renders it, "And very easy to find" (Psalm xlv. 1). Let us then ever look up to the Lord Himself as our best friend. He is not an incomprehensible essence; He has brought Himself near to us in the person of the Lord Jesus. In Him he is easy to find. Think then in every hour of need of the adorable Saviour, the Divine Man. He who was the first, the maker of all things—your maker; He became the last, God visible in the lower world, that He might be a Saviour to the uttermost. Trust in Him, serve Him. Expect Him as your Divine Deliverer, and you will find Him sufficient for all your needs—the Creator, the Saviour, the Friend of His people. He will give you cause to offer up praise unto Him our God.

An influence will also be exercised upon others. Many shall see it, and fear and trust in the Lord. We are not alone in any thing we do. We are connected from the cradle to the grave with many others. We have our family and our kindred, our social friends, our business connexions, our neighbours and fellow-citizens. Upon all these we exercise influence, both consciously and unconsciously. By our uprightness they are strengthened, by our courage they are cheered, by our perseverance they are confirmed in the love of right. Every person is thus a preacher to his neighbour; and the most powerful of all eloquence is the eloquence of a virtuous life. It is a testimony to the whole world that religion is not utopian. It can be practised and realized; for here it is done. When a parent adds to the gentle precepts of true religion, delivered to his children, the practice of a just, a patient, loving life, he preaches to his household in golden words. When a Christian tradesman shews a spirit of

honour and rectitude in his dealings, a desire to afford full justice to his customer, as well as to himself, he preaches with the utmost force the sermon, "Go thou and do likewise." The best sermon any one can preach on patience, is actual calmness under provocation. The preaching of truly good lives is what the world now most needs. It is the one sweet note having the power to reduce to harmony all the discords of mankind. Alas! the world has too long been taught, and been all too ready to believe, that the Lord's commandments—those great laws of heavenly order—cannot be practised, are impossible to be kept. The grand means of proving the contrary is to do them. When men declare that their gods many and lords many do not enable them to do works of faith, and love, and duty; let our lives convince them that our one Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah in His humanity, does give us power to shew we love Him, by keeping his commandments. Do we find that in the world it is practically assumed that selfishness and evil are indigenous, and without remedy, in this world let our lives teach that our Saviour gives us power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt us. This is the sublime mission of the New Jerusalem in the world. To shew in our lives that goodness is the true source of happiness, and truth is the way to goodness, and its defence; to shew that evil, however specious, leads only to misery, and we reject it. We reject what is inconsistent with love to God and man, however seductive it may appear, however pressing to be accepted, however specious, however powerful; we will live by the Lord's law of love and light, and when in our course we endure trials, sufferings, sacrifices, foregoing the gilded baubles of pampered crime, and when to outward loss, inward sorrow is superadded, opening to us inward impurities, which disgust and horrify us, we will still wait patiently upon the Lord; we doubt not that He will incline His ear unto us, and hearken unto our cry. He will lift us from the horrible pit, and from the miry clay. He will put our feet upon a rock and establish our goings. He will put a new song into our mouth, even praise unto our God. Yes, our God, the Lord Jesus, the First and the Last, is alone worthy of praise. From Him, the truths of the New Dispensation descend, and from Him all the power to practise them. From Him comes victory over hell, and victory over sin. From Him comes light to see the path; power to walk in it; patience to persevere; and blessing to encourage us. Let then the praise of every virtuous affection, thought, word, and work be unto Him our God. **In His strength**

let us so unfold the light of His holy city, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He (the One Divine Person) shall reign for ever and ever. Many shall see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord.

And now, my beloved hearers, be not surprised if you should at times be brought into the pit of noise. The Lord alone knows what is best for us. He sees our interior condition, and observes how prone we often are to self-conceit, and self-indulgence. We are apt to settle upon our lees, and suppose we are quite right as we are, and need no further purification. A merciful voice says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." Our gold at present is greatly mixed with dross; it must be cleansed by trial and temptation. The fire will sometimes blaze fiercely; but He who watches over us will take care, if we look to Him, that it shall be a friendly flame. So we may, to induce in us a deeper dependence upon the Lord and a greater distrust of ourselves, be brought into the pit; and it may be a horrible pit, a pit of noise and alarm, in which too there is miry clay, and scarcely any standing. Fear not; but be patient. Hope still in God, and you shall yet praise Him. Joseph was cast into a pit, and after that into a prison, before he was elevated to share the throne of Pharaoh. Daniel was cast into the pit of lions, before he was raised to sit over the province of Babylon. Jeremiah was cast into the pit, but he was lifted thence unharmed. Rest patiently upon the Lord Jesus, and no pit can finally hold you, for He has said,

"Fear not, I am with thee, I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

But above all things we must be mindful of our lives—our feet. If we suffer ourselves to do evil we sink under the temptation, and give infernals the victory over us. We take no harm, however severe the temptation, from temptation itself. "It is not that which goeth into a man which defileth him;" our Divine Master said, "but that which goeth out." We cannot prevent tempting thoughts coming into the mind, but we may prevent them flowing into acts. Let us keep a tight hand upon their outgoings: "Whatsoever we shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven." If in the struggle we stay long in the pit, heed it not; wait patiently. We may hear the noise and alarm of our spiritual foes, but we are safe in the protection of the Lord, and He will bring us to the promised blessings. "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through

water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows."—Ps. lxxvi. 12, 13. Such will ever be our experience if we abide trustfully and lovingly during the tribulation we experience, until the Lord sees good to end them.

It may be that some of my beloved hearers are even now in the pit, even now feel the presence of the miry clay. Suffer me to speak words of comfort to you. Think not that you are less the objects of divine care because of your sorrows: "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth."

It is not a sign of your external character that you are tempted, but rather that you are strong enough to be trusted to fight the good fight. Never forget that you are under the especial providence of Him who said: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The blessed Lord you serve is too powerful to be overcome, too wise to be deceived, and too good to forsake you. He descended from heaven for you; He gave Himself for you, and will surely in His own good time bring you into the peace which passeth all understanding. In all your trials, therefore, wait patiently upon the Lord. Take the beautiful language of the apostle James for your comfort: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."—James v. 8.

But if the reward of the husbandman is the golden grain which waves in plenty over the fields, blest with an abundant harvest, what is that to the glorious reward which awaits the tried but triumphant Christian? His harvest, the very end for which he was created, is secured—peace on earth and peace for ever. His mind, brought into the image of heavenly order, is now a little heaven. His impurities removed, no longer distress him, but all is harmony, purity, and confidence within him. For this, His God has watched over him, waited for him, defended him, and now is about to remove him to His heavenly garner.

"They who die in Christ are bless'd—
Ours be then no thought of grieving!
Sweetly with their God they rest,
All their toils and troubles leaving;
So be ours the faith that saveth,
Hope that every trial braveth,
Love that to the end endureth,
And from Christ the crown secureth."

He knows the nature of heaven and its joys, for he already dwells in the love which produces them. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, for God is love." He has no fears; "perfect love casteth out fear." He knows he will not be forsaken in any future trial, as he has not been forsaken in the past. Death, terrible to most, has no terrors to him. It is the messenger of a loving Father, to call him home. Death lost his sting when sin was conquered: and since then, his dart has been turned into a golden sceptre. He takes a heaven of love, wisdom, peace, and joy with him, and hopes and joys, like angel crowds, swarm within, and bless him with a foretaste of heaven.

SERMON XVIII.

THE TIME TO FAVOUR ZION.

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, they favour the dust thereof."—Ps. cii. 13, 14.

Two things are remarkable in the Psalm before us,—its extreme pathos, and its astonishing sublimity. It seems clear from its contents that it was written during the time of the captivity; and the prophet pours out a wail so tender, and so pitiful, that it is perhaps unequalled in the whole circle of literature, for the utter desolateness it expresses. One can imagine the mournful soul of the servant of God, who had longed, and hoped, and sighed, and prayed, and agonized, for deliverance, but no help came, until hope deferred, and accumulated disappointment, brought him to the very verge of despair, and his heart melted itself into tears and moans, breathing the very agony of sorrow. His days are consumed like smoke. His bones are burnt up with feverish anxiety. His heart is smitten and withered like dried grass. He is like a pelican in the wilderness, the sad owl in the desert, the lonely bird on the housetop overlooking the wide-spread ruin. One single ground of consolation remains,—Jehovah loves His people as ever. The remembrance of His wonderful mercy in days gone by will never perish, and He will doubtless arise and have mercy on Zion. The prophet singer believes the time, the appointed time, has come; for he pleads, "Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, they favour the dust thereof." By building up Zion again, the nations will fear the name of Jehovah, and all kings his glory.

But the grandeur of the latter portion of this Psalm is quite equal to the plaintive wail of the former. How sublime is the likeness of the universe to the vesture of the eternal. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt

endure: yea, they shall all wax old like a garment; like a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not end."—Ps. cii. 25—27. There is a vesture which perishes, and one which does not perish. Let us consider them both.

It is an idea no less sublime than stupendous and true, to regard the universe as the dress of the Almighty, the gorgeous array of systems and stars, as the jewels of His robe. The glories of heaven, and all the countless societies there, are but the inner vesture of the Love and Wisdom of the Divine Man; and the countless worlds of the universe, with all their inhabitants are His outer garments.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart,
As full, as perfect, in poor man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all."

This expression of the wondrous truth, "In him we live, and move, and have our being," takes our attention to a vesture of the Almighty, which is permanent after its creation. Thus the Psalmist declares: "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them FOR EVER AND EVER: He hath made a decree which shall NOT pass."—Ps. cxlviii. 3—6. The declarations of the Psalms, which speak of the stability of the created universe are numerous and striking. "They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, *throughout ALL GENERATIONS.*"—Ps. lxxii. 5. "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."—Ver. 7. "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."—Ver. 17. Here, the sun, moon, and stars, are all declared, to be established to exist for ever; to continue as long as the Lord's peace and name shall continue. And when we remember that they are creations of Divine Love, for the purpose of calling into existence and training ever-increasing myriads of finite

beings that they might be blessed for ever,—creations whose order human error cannot interrupt nor spoil,—we may perceive that no change can take place with them which would impair their stability. He hath established them for ever and ever. The earth too, as to its material laws and conditions, is declared to be formed equally for perpetuity. See the following intimations. “And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.”—Ps. lxxviii. 69. “The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself; the world also is stablished, that it CANNOT BE MOVED.”—Ps. xciii. 1. “Say among the heathen, the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it SHALL NOT BE MOVED: he shall judge the people righteously.”—Ps. xcvi. 10. “Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed FOR EVER.”—Ps. civ. 5.

There is then a vesture, a clothing of the Divine Majesty, which will not be changed, a robe which endureth for ever. The outward universe, as an outbirth from Divine Love and Wisdom for everlasting ends, will everlastingly endure. The Divine purpose which brought it into being is unchanged, cannot change. The love of God cannot cease to be, nor can it be filled with objects to eternity, for it is infinite. It will still demand more, not fewer, immortal beings whom it can bless; therefore creation will encrease, but never come to an end. The Giver of life will never become the author of death; the Creator will never become the destroyer; the same fountain, as the apostle says, cannot send forth sweet and bitter.

There is, nevertheless, in the Psalm before us, mention of a vesture which will be changed, of a garment which waxes old, in allusion to the heavens and the earth. And this brings us to another, and very important subject of reflection. The Spirit of the Lord, we have seen, covers itself with the universe of mind and matter, as a clothing of its divine thoughts and purposes, and as the means of carrying them out to an everlasting completion. And, this universe, as under the laws of the Divine Majesty alone, undisturbed by human perversity, answers its ends and obeys its laws with perfect order, and perfect truth, it will therefore be stable. There is, however, another clothing of the Spirit of God, another heaven and earth, which is not so fixed; I mean the moral and intellectual world, which we call society. For all the feelings, thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and institutions, which at any particular time are prevalent in the world, are nothing but the human investment of the Divine Spirit, some-

times pure, sometimes a mass of awful perversions, but at all times man's covering of divine principles. The love of God broods over man, and moves him to be happy; the wisdom of God informs him of the means of happiness; the power of God places at his disposal the ability to effect the purposes of his life. If man, wisely and purely, receives the impulses of the Divine Love, and desires to feel and live in its hallowed delights, he forms a heaven within of purity and peace. He receives and clothes the Divine Love and Wisdom with emotions and desires, affections and delights, which are all in harmony with it. He abides in the Lord, and the Lord makes His abode with him. His thoughts are derived from the teachings of the wisdom of heaven; he learns and he teaches the laws and the lessons of true intelligence, and he originates around him, in the Church and in the State, a condition of society which embodies his reading of the truth. He clothes the truth, with what he conceives it means, directs and intends, and thus produces a good transcript on earth of the heaven he feels within. This is a moral HEAVEN and EARTH; a new creation. This, however, as it is man's rendering of God's Holy Spirit in the world, is a heaven and earth not stable and abiding like the universe in which God reigns alone. It has the weakness of humanity about it. It is like a garment which waxes old. It is a vesture which is changed. It is a heaven and earth which pass away, giving place to new heavens and a new earth; or in other words, a new dispensation, a new church, and society among mankind. This has been often done. The earliest dispensation of religion among mankind, or the Most Ancient Church described by the creation in Genesis, and the placing of Adam in Eden, in the garden of delight, was a realization of the Divine idea that man should be happy, by enjoying the blessings of love to God and man, and the perception of the Divine wisdom in nature by correspondence. All nature was a book, in which they delighted to read. Creation was to them a garden of innocence and wisdom. They had child-like simplicity of heart, and heaven was reflected to them in all they saw around. Their heaven was realized in the interior light and joy they experienced, and their peaceful, simple, happy, outward life was their earth. All went well for a time, perhaps a very long time,—it was the golden age. The Divine idea, that man should be innocently, simply, and wisely happy, was, we conceive, clothed with every form of vegetable beauty; they lived in gardens, the outer paradise being the reflection of the inner one. We have very faint means of knowing how long it continued in its purity; but at

length there came a desire not to be so entirely led by the Lord as before. The love of external sensual life, the serpent, insinuated self-derived intelligence grounded in appearances; self-will arose, and that train of errors and evils was generated, which brought this first great dispensation to an end in the soul-destroying falsities represented by the flood. Another dispensation was begun, signified by Noah and the ark. To those who, in their time, like the Psalmist in his time, prayed that the water-floods might not come in upon their souls, the Divine Mercy gave help and consolation. Divine truth in its beauty was imparted to them. They cultivated the spiritual vine. It was the age of silver. They did not satisfy themselves, like their forefathers of the golden age, with the peaceful perception of the correspondences in nature, but they delighted in imitating correspondences, in making representatives. They originated the beautiful mythologies of India and the Greeks. From them came the hieroglyphics of Egypt, the strange winged forms, and mythic trees of buried Nineveh. All these wondrous stories and figures were full of intelligence and wisdom to them, and they gloried in them, spreading them over all the East. They, however, degenerated into idolatry and corruption. The degenerate sons made idols of what was full of meaning to the fathers. Instead of dedicating their affections in worship and in life to the will of their heavenly Father, they offered up the animals which corresponded to them. Their evils sunk them into stupidity. Hence came the idolatries, the strange myths, the bloody sacrifices of the ancient heathen world, all originating in the perversions of correspondences, the garment had again become old, the vesture must again be changed. The darkened heavens and earth must again pass away, and a new heaven and earth, or a new state of society be formed. Then came the Jewish Church. The world was sunk so low that no intellectual or spiritual Church could then be formed, and yet the fulness of time had not arrived for Jehovah Himself to become incarnate. A typical dispensation must now be formed; and the Jewish religion was begun. The Divine idea amongst them clothed itself with all the arrangements of the tabernacle and the temple, the priestly robes, the minute regulations of the sacrifices, and the patterns of things in the heavens, which would prevail until the time of the great and wonderful work of God—His own manifestation in the flesh. At first the Jews were happy in performing this use. They were in a heaven of enjoyment in being distinguished by so many miracles and so many divine favours. They made a new state of society, a new crowd of institutions, a new earth, in

their Canaan, and for a time all went well. But the theocracy established did not last long. The people thirsted for distinction among the nations. The selfish and worldly spirit set in. They would have kings, armies, and selfish dominations. They must have grand alliances with powerful heathen nations. Their religion itself became corrupted by vain traditions, and at length was what the Great Saviour found it, a system of hypocrisy and deceit, preying upon blind dupes. The garment had become once more old; the vesture must be once more changed. Again, heaven and earth, the Jewish heaven and earth, must pass away, and a new heaven and earth be formed. And now that we are on times to which the revelation of the Jews refer, we have ample opportunity of noticing what the breaking down and removal of heaven and earth really imply. When treating of the foundation of the Jewish Church, the Lord, speaking by the prophet, says, "And I have put my words into thy mouth, and I have covered thee, in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."—Isa. li. 16. Surely, no one will fail to admit that the heaven and earth here spoken of mean the Jewish Church as to its interior principles, and the results which grow out of them.

When that church was sinking into decay, it is represented as an earth in a state of dissolution. Thus David said, "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it."—Ps. lxxv. 3. Certainly, the earth whose pillars David bore up, could be nothing else than the Jewish Church. Again, it is said, "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course."—Ps. lxxxii. 5. But what foundations go out of course when the people will not know nor understand their true duty, but will walk on in darkness? Surely no other foundations but the foundations of truth and virtue!

The prophet Isaiah has a whole chapter strikingly illustrative of this use of earth to signify the Church. "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."—Chap. xxiv. 4—6. Here, not only is the earth represented as fading away

between two and three thousand years ago; but the inhabitants, as being *burned*, and few men being left. Such language is quite without meaning respecting any earth but the moral earth, that is, the Church. But when its members fall away from goodness, and sink into the embraces of vice, they become inflamed with lust and passion, which is the burning the prophet means, and there are few men left. Again he says, "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly."—ver. 19. But what earth? Surely not God's earth! The material world has been as little dissolved up to the present time as it ever was. It is man's earth, the society which man forms, which dissolves when it looses its hold on God and immortal principles, and gives itself a prey to self, to falsehood, and to sin. The prophet Jeremiah speaks in the same manner, and, I may say, all the prophets, for it is the Divine style; "For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light."—Chap. iv. 22, 23. No one surely can fail to see that the heavens which had no light are the minds of those who were wise to do evil, but to do good had no knowledge; while the disordered and void earth is the wretched state of society which they produce. When the Jewish Church is described as about to pass away and to give place to the Christian, this is the language in which it is described: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."—Isa. lxxv. 17, 18.

The Jewish heavens had become darkened by falsehood,—they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; the Jewish earth had become a mass of mingled heathenish tradition and sordid schemes for making everything subservient to a greedy desire for gain: this should give place to the new heavens of Christian faith and love, and the new earth of Christian obedience and benevolence. Men were to be removed from the old man of selfishness to the new man of Christ; and, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," said the apostle, "old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."—2 Cor. v. 18.

And now we may be prepared to regard the sublime language of this Psalm with a solemn and deep significance in

relation to the rise, the progress, and the decline, of Churches or great dispensations of divine things among mankind. They are as successive vestures clothing the Spirit of God among men. At first they are as a new and beautiful robe of the Almighty, but in time they become corrupt, they wax old as a garment. The Spirit of the living God, which they clothe, remains the same, and it puts no new piece on the old garment. As a vesture it changes them, and they shall be changed; but He is the same, and His years have no end. So was it with the golden or Adamic age; so was it with the Noetic or silver age; so was it with the Jewish; and so was it to be, and so has it been, with the Christian.

Some, however, may demur, when they hear that the first Christian Church was in time to give way to a second, represented by the New Jerusalem. Yet it is plainly so taught in Holy Writ; and if we have succeeded in shewing that the passing away of heaven and earth, and the formation of new heavens and a new earth, is a Scriptural mode of stating the end of an old Church, and the beginning of a new one, then there will be no difficulty in admitting that the first Christian Church would come to an end, and give place to a better; for there can be no question, but that in the New Testament it is prophesied that heaven and earth would once more pass away, and a new heaven and earth be formed. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said our Lord, "but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 36); meaning that the dispensation He then established would come to an end, but from His divine words another would arise. The apostle Peter, in language very like that in which the prophet Isaiah described the fallen Jewish Church, and which we have already quoted,—"The earth is clean dissolved," etc.,—announces the end of the first Christian Church, when he says, "Looking for and hasting unto the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."—2 Peter iii. 12. The heavens are on fire when the inward hearts of men are possessed by selfish excitement, by lust and passion, when hate takes the place of love, and revenge the place of mercy. In such case the elements of virtue and right melt with fervent heat, and become destroyed. Nevertheless, as the apostle continues, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, or justice. The new heavens and earth are not to contain new sun, new moon, or new stars; but they are to contain justice.

To the same effect is the vision of John in the Book of

Revelation: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: and the former heaven and the former earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband."—Rev. xxi. 1, 2. This language, in the divine manner of speaking, assures us that the heaven and earth of the first Christian dispensation would be succeeded by another. Jerusalem, in spiritual language, undoubtedly means the Church, and a New Jerusalem can only mean a New Church. This would descend upon earth, and transform by its glorious principles the kingdoms of this world, to be the kingdoms of the Lord Jesus Christ, doing His will, and receiving His happiness.

That which is thus symbolically taught by these majestic emblems was also plainly taught by the Lord Himself: "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."—Matt. xxiv. 11, 12. The very expression "end of the age," frequently used by our Lord, and erroneously in our version translated "end of the world," teaches that the "age" He instituted, like other "ages" would have its end. The word *aiōn*, translated world, occurs in the Greek of the New Testament one hundred and twenty-eight times, and is rendered many ways, but never once means the material globe. It is rendered by age several times, as in Col. i. 26; Eph. ii. 7; iii. 21: and such is its proper meaning. And therefore the end of the age is an announcement that an end would come to that "age," as it had come to others, and something still more perfect would be revealed by Him who is the God of all ages. The apostle expresses it thus; "For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."—1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.

That which was given in part at the beginning, because the world was not in a state to bear a fuller revelation, would then gradually become darker and darker unto its end, and then that which is perfect, a full developement of heavenly wisdom would take place. The great leading feature of that more perfect system would be a clear and full knowledge of the Lord. "The time cometh," said the Saviour, "when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I will shew you PLAINLY OF THE FATHER."

And now, looking backwards up the history of the Christian Church, what is it but a long declension? The time would fail me to trace, however faintly, the gloomy story, abounding in follies and cruelties, which announce not religion, but baptized

heathenism. In the days even of the apostles, they saw the spirit of religion already becoming tainted with pride and folly (2 Thess. ii. 3—7; John iv. 1—3). Onwards the mystery of iniquity worked, weaving self and sanctimoniousness into an awful system of priestcraft and sensuality. In the third and fourth centuries a scheme of religion acquired encreasing influence, and became full blown at the Council of Nice in 324, by which the deity was divided into three persons of different characters, and men were led to hope to be saved, not by following the Great Saviour, and becoming like-minded with Him, but by praying at any time to one of the divine persons to pacify the other. Instead of altering themselves, they were bent upon altering God. This unhappy folly spread and deepened. First it began by setting up the Saviour as a different Being from the Father, to pacify Him. Then the Virgin Mary was exalted, from the idea that she was a gentle being, who would still more easily wink at the frailties of her worshippers, and she would incline her Son to mercy. Then successive saints were exalted, who were thought likely to influence the Virgin, and so on. And as this direful state of things spread, iniquity abounded amongst priests and people, so that an ever-darkening gloom thickened over the human mind, diversified chiefly by flashes of tremendous crime,—nations and creeds burning against others with dread volcanoes of malice, hate, and vengeance, terrible to contemplate. The cruelties against the Albigenses, the monstrosities of the Inquisition, the thirty years' war between Catholics and Protestants in Germany, the terrible Huguenot dragonnades, are fearful illustrations of what we mean, when it was evident that the so-called religious were but fiends in human shape; and the doctrines which could produce such characters must be fearful perversions of pure and undefiled religion. BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM. At last the midnight of such a fearful time arrived, when just a century ago, even the pretence of believing in religion at all was almost entirely cast off. Infidel and sensual kings, infidel and sensual priests, infidel and sensual philosophers, were the rule throughout Christendom, with the faintest possible exceptions; and Europe and the world were drifting into the dreadful convulsion of the French Revolution. This was the end of that age. It was once more a terrible flood: atheism, deism, materialism, and every form of falsehood, rolled on like the roaring waves of the sea. The world was voted a mere crust of matter, on which men crept for their little day, animated by their petty passions, and then sunk into everlasting silence. The time was terrible. The floods were awful. No

hope appeared. "The floods lifted up, O Lord, the floods lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves: but the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."—Ps. xciii. 3, 4. He who ever loves and cares for mankind, cared for them, and launched a little ark over this troubled ocean. A new and spiritual religion was disclosed to the human race, as small at first as one man's hand, but containing in it the germs of a new age. This religion, for a divided God, offered the Great Saviour, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9), for a God of infinite anger, directed men's minds to Jesus, the God of Infinite Love. Instead of looking at the universe as a great cold machine of dead matter, it regarded nature as the clothing of spirit, and warmed everywhere by its living soul. Man's life in the world is no longer a chance medley of only passing moment; but is the wondrous apprenticeship, in which souls learn eternal principles, and to do immortal work, and death is the entrance to higher life. The Divine Word is no longer a mere historical record, a thing of shreds and patches, for each quibbler to run away with and quarrel over, but a wondrous casket, whose glorious gems may be seen to be worthy of its Author, no longer the letter that killeth, but the spirit that giveth life (2 Cor. iii. 6). The divine commandments are the only laws of happiness, and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus is the spirit of love and light which imparts power to keep them. Heaven is no longer like a mere word or dream, but is a land whose laws are order flowing from love and wisdom, and whose perfections are purities in form. Such are the outlines of this wonderful ark, which saved a few. It floated above and on the waters at first, but at length obtained a solid settlement on the earth, and became a beautiful golden pearly city, in which ever-increasing numbers take up their happy home. Of this city it is written, "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain."—Zech. viii. 3.

And now we may appreciate the bearing of our text, and its connected truths in this psalm. As mankind declined, the truly good must have felt more and more lonely and desolate. Their great sad souls must have sickened, and mourned, and been like the sparrow on the house-top. One cheering light after another went out, and there was only one ground of hope, "The Lord endured for ever."—Ver. 12. On this, though mournfully leaning, they could hold fast. But now we live a century after the dark time of the end, and signs of morning everywhere

appear. Now, it may be said, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."—Ver. 13.

By Zion is meant the Church as to goodness. The term Zion is expressive of elevation, and the soul is only elevated in the sight of the Lord in proportion as it is receptive of goodness from Him. "And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (or love)."—1 Cor. xiii. 13. As then a person becomes animated by love to the Lord and his neighbour, he enters the heavenly Zion. Therefore the apostle said to the truly converted, "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels." The temple was on Mount Zion, literally, to teach us that the Lord should be worshipped from goodness. For the same reason Zion is spoken of in its representative character in the most glowing terms. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion."—Ps. xlviii. 1, 2. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."—Ps. lxxxvii. 2, 3. The truths which, like gates, introduce men to holy love and hallowed goodness, are of more value in the sight of the Lord than all the states of mere faith and knowledge. All the principles of the New Church tend to and strengthen goodness. When, therefore, these truths are being unfolded and received among mankind, it may be truly said, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."—Ps. cii. 13.

It is said the time to favour her, but it is clear the word time implies its spiritual sense, which is state. State constitutes the time of the soul. When the soul is in a state of sorrow, a short time appears long; when in a state of joy, a long time appears short. The time to favour Zion, then, means the state to favour Zion. And it is repeated, because before Zion can be really blessed, there must be a state of love in the heart and of faith in the mind. Hence it is expressed in the double form, "the time," and "the set time." It is, however, more particularly explained as we proceed. "For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."—Ver. 14.

It is manifest that the time for favouring Zion depends upon the state here expressed. When the servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust, then the time to favour Zion has arrived.

The stones of Zion are the truths which flow from, and lead to goodness, and to favour them is to love them. Let us examine these stones a little. The first is a most wonderful one, it is this. That Jehovah himself from infinite love visited the world as its Saviour. "In his love and in his pity, he redeemed them."—Isa. lxiii. 9. This is the stone which the builders rejected, and which has become the headstone of the corner (Luke xx. 17). It is the pearl of great price (Matt. xiii. 46). It is the stone of which it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste."—Isa. xxviii. 16. When this stone sinks deeply into the heart it becomes a foundation of hope, of trust, of love, and consolations innumerable. If my Heavenly Father really became my Saviour then will I fear nothing: I know the Almighty One loves me. If the Father were seen in Jesus, and He is the First and the Last, then am I safe. I know there is no angry frowning Deity; He is, He must be love. What but love could bring Him down to us, to make His mercy really known, and to save man to the uttermost! He who restored sight to the blind, and strength to the lame, raised the dead, and calmed the sea, and has all power in heaven and on earth, will restore, strengthen, enlighten, raise, and calm me. This stone has seven eyes upon it: all divine wisdom flows from it (Zech. iii. 9). If it be true that God was manifested in the flesh, then Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us Isa. xxxiii. 22. It must be true, the heart demands this close conjunction with its God, and when He says, "He that seeth ME, hath seen the Father:" thy servants, adorable Redeemer, take pleasure in this stone. But there are many other delightful stones. It is written, "I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."—Isa. liv. 12. The windows are of agates, when a rational faith freely admits the light of heaven into the soul; the gates are of carbuncles, when the introductory truths of religion are all assurance of the mercy and wisdom by which all things are arranged for our salvation and happiness, and when we see the spirit shining through the letter of the whole Sacred Scripture, all our borders are precious stones. The servants of the Lord take pleasure in these stones of Zion. They love them for their own sake, and they love them for their Giver's.

And, may I not address all of you my hearers, and ask is there not an unspeakable pleasure in contemplating those holy truths which yield us a religion which satisfies at once the heart,

the reason and the life, which throws light over the eternal world, and brings its laws down to make of earth a preparatory heaven. Thy servants take pleasure in her stones. They favour the dust thereof.

Dust corresponds to what is external, and of comparatively slight importance. The outward possessions which so entirely please the selfish, are called dust in the Word: "Dust shall be the serpent's meat."—Isa. lxxv. 25. Celestial and spiritual blessings, are expressed by gold and silver in the divine estimation; but the fleeting possessions of time, are regarded as dust. The soul that seeks its satisfaction in power, pomp, or wealth, will find itself as empty and unblessed as an animal would which sought to supply its nourishment by feeding on dust. How often has this been realized. Title, fame, talents, rank, and wealth, could not save the lordly poet from the sad lament on his thirty-sixth birthday,—

" My years are in the fallow leaf,
And all the life of life is gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone."

Earthly possessions are, however, valuable if used as means, and not regarded as ends, if made subservient to real usefulness and not set up as idols. They only become dangerous and destructive when we seek to feed upon them, or in other words, make them the very delight of our souls. The dust of Zion means the externals of the church. These are of little importance compared with its internal principles. Attendance upon outward worship, singing, outward prayer, the externals of the sacraments when compared to the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, faith, are but as mere dust. Yet we should not forget that mountains are made of atoms. Each grain of dust, though of small value in itself, is of great importance as tending to a great result. Attendance upon public worship is an external thing, not to be compared with the value of the possession of interior heavenly virtues; but when regarded as a means of attaining and strengthening heavenly virtues, its worth is great indeed.

We cannot too strongly impress upon ourselves the greatness of little things. The dust of Zion is sacred dust, and the wise servants of the Lord favour the dust thereof. They love the very spot, where they hear the Word, pour out their souls in prayer, and join in sacred song. They delight in worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness. They will never willingly be absent. They go cheerfully, and testify their cheerfulness by

being ready in good time to join in the invocation for the presence of the Lord. They know that the ministry of the Word is the divine means of imparting to them light, and strength, and blessing, and they enter into the feeling expressed by the Psalmist: "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 enquire in his temple."—Ps. xxvii. 4. Well is it for us, and well is it for the Church, when we thus take pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favour the dust thereof.

Let us never suppose that attendance on divine worship in our solemn assemblies is a matter of indifference. Little as the good of outward worship at one particular time may be, he who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much (Luke xvi. 10. When we love the dust of Zion, and testify our love by a prompt, cheerful, punctual presence at the hearing of the Word and worship; the time to favour Zion, yea, the set time to favour her is come. What stones are like her stones? What dust is like her dust? Can any earthly knowledge or science be compared with the treasures of heavenly wisdom? The grand themes of the nature and ways of the Lord; the wonders and glories of His Word; the regeneration of the human soul; the laws of heaven and of the universe; the happiness of the angels; the principles of the Church; these comprise stones of splendour, and of inestimable worth. Thy servants take pleasure in her stones. And what assemblies can compare with the public worship of the Lord, when our hearts enter into its sacred delights? There the ever-blessed One speaks to us in His word. He sits at the mouth of the well from which springs the water of everlasting life. There we commune with Him in prayer, and elevated for a time above all earthly cares, we dwell in the atmosphere of angelic thought, and are sunned with divine light and heat. Our hearts burn within us, while He talks with us by the way. No other meeting is for a moment to be compared with the public worship of the Lord. And when we ponder upon its worth, none will be so highly prized. We shall take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

And now, my beloved hearers, I feel fully impressed with the persuasion that you yearn to have Zion favoured in the world. You know that mankind will never be orderly and happy, until all things earthly are filled and guided by things spiritual and divine. We long to see the Church encrease, because her encrease is the encrease of the means of order, of good-

will, of purity, of peace, and of blessing among mankind. We have often walked round Zion; and told her towers. We have marked well her bulwarks, and considered her palaces, that we may tell it to the generation following. Often have we said, "This God is our God, for ever and ever: he will be our guide unto death."—Ps. *xlvi.* 12—14.

How shall we do our part to help on the progress of mankind towards this universal justice, enlightenment, peace, and happiness? Only by this:—Let us in all our learning, doing, and worshipping, shew that we take pleasure in the stones of Zion. Let us talk of them in our families, and shew our value of them in our lives. Let us be earnest, attentive, and warm in our worship. Let it be seen that we delight to be there. Let us be glad when they say unto us, "We will go up to the house of the Lord." So shall we prove that we love the very dust of Zion; and we shall find, by a delightful experience in our own states, and by the success of the Lord's Church, even in our day, that "The time to favour Zion, yea, the set time to favour her, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, they favour the dust thereof."

The manifest tendency of all this is to realize what prophets have long proclaimed as the ultimate destiny of mankind, the reign of a God who can be known as a God of love and light, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the Saviour of all the families of mankind, regenerated in bonds of brotherhood, governed by justice, and enjoying peace. Where is this God of love and light to be found but in the Lord Jesus Christ:—Jehovah now made known in His Divine Humanity? Isaiah calls this, "All nations coming to the house of Jehovah at the top of the mountains."—chap. *ii.* 2. Zechariah says, "In that day there shall be one King over all the earth. In that day there shall be one Jehovah, and his name one."—chap. *xiv.* 9. The opening of the Word shall be the grand means of leading mankind to happiness; 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. There shall be a victory over evils, and from the mountain of love to the Lord, all unkindness shall be subdued. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. *xi.* 9.

"Peace o'er the world, her olive wand extends,
And white-robed innocence from heaven descends."

SERMON XIX.

THE BORN IN ZION.

"And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah."—Ps. lxxxvii. 5, 6.

THE Word of God has not only a spiritual sense, but that sense is connected and flows on in a series. Hence it is well to notice the commencement of a subject, to observe the beginning of a divine lesson, that we may lay hold of the successive links of the golden chain until the whole is unfolded. This will give us the clue, without which we should not fully perceive the application. We may illustrate these remarks by the Psalm before us. It commences with the words, "His foundation is in the holy mountains." Very frequently in the Scriptures the foundation of man is said to be on a rock. In the fortieth Psalm, it is said of the delivered Christian, "He set my feet upon a rock;" in the prophecy of Isaiah, in like manner, we read, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (xxviii. 16); and in the Gospel our Lord declares, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock."

That there is some reason for this striking difference in the character of the foundation will readily occur, and that reason will be found fully satisfactory if we have some knowledge of spiritual life, and also of the science of correspondencies; by which, as the divinely-appropriate vessel, living water can be drawn from the deep wells of salvation. There are two general classes of spiritual character, the celestial and the spiritual. In the celestial, goodness predominates, and there is an air of sweetness and gentleness in all they think, and all they do. The spiritual are they in whom truth has the chief place. They are sharp, keen, brilliant it may be, but hard. The celestial are more in-

tent upon the oil of religion, the spiritual upon the light. The spiritual man is more of a warrior; the celestial more of a peacemaker. The one has more of the force of the cherub, the other of the glow of the seraph. The spiritual revels in conflict and victory, the celestial delights in peace. In the order of complete regeneration the Christian advances, first in light and then in love, first in faith and then in charity. First he is a conqueror in his struggles for purity, and then he is more than conqueror—he has entered upon the region of interior peace. He is spiritual during the days or states of his spirit's labour; he is celestial when he has attained the sabbath of the soul. The foundation of the spiritual man is the rock of divine truth; the foundation of the celestial man is the mountain of divine love. It is the divine love which gives the celestial man his supply of holy feelings, which is the object of his supreme regard. He exclaims, in the language of Psalm cxxi., when perfectly rendered, "I will look unto the mountains, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."—Ver. 1, 2. Again, "Thy righteousness is like great mountains."—Ps. xxxvi. 6.

The commencement of this Psalm being a reference to the celestial things of the divine love, gives us the key to the whole subject of it. The sanctity, the surpassing worth, and the blessedness of the church in which love is the chief element, the crowning principle, is the topic of every verse.

The celestial and spiritual sides of religion were typified by those constantly recurring terms, Zion and Jerusalem. Zion, being the most elevated part of the holy city, and the part on which the temple stood, represented the celestial men of the Church. Jerusalem, whose name implies the "sight of peace," represented the spiritual men of the Church. Each complete Christian, however, partakes of both, and then Zion denotes his will, in which love reigns, and Jerusalem his intellect, in which truth is ruler. The use of both names is very frequent in the Word, and ever with this discrimination. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken."—Isa. xxxiii. 20. Zion is the Church as to that hallowed love of goodness which solemnizes the affections, and Jerusalem the Church as to those truths which gladden the eyes of the mind. In Zechariah it is said, "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the

mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.”—Chap. viii. 3. Here Jerusalem is the city of truth, and Zion is the mountain of holiness. The apostle Paul shews the spiritual use of both these terms, when he remarks to the Hebrews who had embraced Christianity, “But ye are come to 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 firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”—Heb. xii. 22, 23. Zion, as representing a state of love, and those in whom love reigns, because such persons are truly the Lord’s Church in an eminent degree, is often spoken of in the most glowing terms. “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion.”—Ps. xlviii. 1, 2. Again, “Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”—Ver. 12—14. Were we Jews, and exulting in the capital city of our native land, our patriotic feelings might warrant these glowing terms; but in this sense only they would not be worthy of a place in the Word of the universal Lord. No national predilections are to be admitted there. Again, the angels of heaven were seen by St. John on mount Zion; he says, “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.”—Rev. xiv. 1. This is beautifully expressive, when we know that to be on mount Zion means to be in a state of holy love to the Lord. In harmony with this is having the Father’s name written on the forehead. For the Father means the divine love, and His name on the forehead means His nature inscribed on the will. The will is above the intellect, as the forehead is above the eyes. The spiritual meaning of Zion is surely evident now, for in application to the heavenly world it can have no other meaning. It was the highest part of Jerusalem, its very name signifies height, and it represents therefore the highest principle and state in religion. “Now abideth faith, hope, and charity, (or love,) these three; and the greatest of these is charity.”—1 Cor. xiii. 13. Hence we may perceive the reason for the remarkable language of the second verse of the Psalm before us; “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”—Ver. 2. The gates of Zion are the truths which

lead men to states of love. These are precious in the Lord's sight, more than all the speculations of science or knowledge, or faith even. For "though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, and have not charity, I am nothing."—1 Cor. xiii. 2. Without the possession of heavenly love, no other grace is truly valuable. Love is the fulfilling of the law; love worketh no ill to his neighbour. Love disposes the heart to believe: love rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. Because, then, Zion represents the Church especially as to the principles of love, and the persons in whom these are cherished, we may see the propriety of the divine declaration, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."—Ver. 2. The Lord desires that we should be not men of profession only, or of a cold fault-finding, talking religion alone, but that we should go through the gates of Zion, and become men of love.

The Zion, then, whose gates the Lord loves, and of which it shall be said, when He counts up the people, "This man was born in her," is no local Jewish city, but a state of holy inward love. We cannot surely suppose that the Almighty has any preferences of one place over another in His beautiful earth. He who is no respecter of persons, will certainly not be a respecter of cities. To a just and sensible man, the accident of birth constitutes no real merit. He respects a good man wherever he may have been born; much more is this the case with Him who is perfectly just.

When, then, it is written, "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her," our attention is intended to be directed to the all-important subject of our re-birth, or regeneration, so as to have a new nature from the Lord, and become the citizens of a new heavenly city; the inward communion of saints. "Ye must be born again," said our Lord. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And again, "He cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John iii. 7, 3, 5.

This doctrine, so distinctly declared, is corroborated by all experience. With man, such as he is by nature, orderly and constant happiness is impossible. Indeed, a reflecting mind will easily perceive that society, as it exists, is the outbirth of the minds which compose it; and if those minds were transported to another world, they would produce all the tangled maze of order and disorder, joy and sorrow, care and negligence, success and failure, health and sickness, wealth and poverty, which compose society now.

This is strikingly manifested in the reproduction of new cities in new countries. They are the very fac-similes of the old. The United States and Australia are England repeated. The emigrants have taken their minds, their characters, themselves with them, and the result is, that the same interior causes which produced the restless selfish struggles of the old world, reproduced them in the new. It is not change of place which will alter these, it is only change of state. So would it be after death, without an interior change. There could be no heaven formed out of minds which are not heavenly. Again, let us ask, What is man in his present condition? Self is confessedly most painfully prominent in the varied scenes of life.

"The trail of the serpent is over them all."

The greedy lusts of power, of gain, and of sensual pleasures, induce incessant restlessness, incessant conflict. Within man they assail the virtues implanted by the Lord to counteract the fall. For, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." There can be no true peace so long as this inward contest is continued. But in every act some principles prevail to induce action, and too often the worse part of our nature prevails, and then we come into difficulties with others, and rouse opposition. This opposition induces further effort and struggle, and stirs up the deeps of our fallen and depraved characters. The result is energy in evil, which often produces crimes at which the perpetrator would once have shuddered. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And in its dark recesses are often hatched horrors which make the world stand aghast. "Out of the heart," said our Lord, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man."—Matt. xv. 19, 20. By education, by the usages of society, by the power of law, the real character of the perverted affections of the will are smoothed over, but it is in vain to deny its direful condition. It was created at first in the image of earth, but now it is the image of hell. Let a man examine the movements of his own heart and mind, and except so far as religion has subdued, chastened, and renewed them, they are the abodes of the foulest desires and insanest follies. Were he to utter aloud what his inflamed passions suggest, men would shrink from him with loathing. When the mask falls off during intoxication or under great excitement, when self-com-

mand is for the time lost, or, as in the lowest grades of society, where self-respect and mutual respect are at a very low ebb, then the fearful depravity of fallen man appears, and no words can equal the horrible reality. During an insurrection, when law is suspended, and hoarded vengeance and ruffianism riot unchecked in villainous indulgence, the difference between man and fiend appears exceedingly minute. See the accounts of the horrid brutalities which arrive day by day to shock and agonize us from India. Before the outburst of the mutiny all seemed smooth, decent, and even obsequious, but when the ties of order were loosened, and the vile impulses of unregenerate men held complete sway, what abominations were perpetrated! How does the heart sicken as it notes the malignant atrocities of which women and children were the victims! It was as if hell were let loose. Refined cruelties, slow tortures, maddening indignities, strange obscenities, and horrid orgies were committed on all sides, at which our common humanity trembles with indignation, and shudders with loathing horror. Yet such in itself is unregenerate human nature. And, how strongly do these things echo the divine words, "Ye must be born again."

How could a heaven be formed out of minds like these? Some have proposed to make men happy by a better arrangement of their outward circumstances. But supposing all men could be placed beyond the reach of want, and be enabled even to roll in splendour, with their minds unregenerate they would still be impure and unhappy. The proportion of happy persons amongst the high is quite as small as amongst the lowly. The volcano may look smooth, and smiling vineyards on its sides may induce the traveller to believe that solid peace reigns there, but a raging fire is gathering fierceness within, and shortly will pour its red rivers over village, church, homestead, and smiling fields, burying them beneath its scorching streams. So is it with human nature unchanged by religion. The blandest manners may be there, a smooth and smiling courtesy may give it an attractiveness of the most inviting character, but if the power of the Divine Saviour has not supplied it with inward virtue, the time will come when the old man will assert his native selfishness, vileness, and fury, and those who have leaned upon it will discover that the beauty they admired is the beauty of the serpent's skin, and with the brilliant colours of the skin there is also the danger of the reptile's deadly bite.

No, there is no lasting peace, lasting safety, or lasting love-failure, but in obedience to the divine injunction, "Ye must be society nⁿ."

“ If happiness have not her seat
 And centre in the breast ;
 We may be wise, or rich, or great,
 But never can be blest.
 No treasures, nor pleasures,
 Could make us happy long ;
 The heart ay's the part ay
 That makes us right or wrong.”

But the heart by nature is the seat of selfishness and sin. Until this has been changed by power from heaven, true and lasting happiness is impossible.

The necessity for man's regeneration will appear still more manifestly if we consider what heaven is. The word *hashamayim* (heavens), in the original language, is derived from the union of *esh* (fire), with *mayim* (waters). And the orderly union of the fire of love with the waters of truth, gives us the interior elements of heaven. The two grand principles of love are insisted on by the Lord as the very essence of religion, because heaven and happiness without them are impossible. Love to God is the conjoining link between God, the Fountain of happiness, and man its receiver ; and unless the receiver be conjoined with the Giver, it is obviously impossible that the gift of happiness can take place. “ The kingdom of God,” the apostle declared, “ is not meat and drink : but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”—Rom. xiv. 17. “ The kingdom of God is within you,” the Lord Jesus said. And the least reflection will enable any one to see, that just as the earth can only bloom, and bear, and be blessed under the warm and glorious presence of the sun, so immortal man can only become truly happy in conjunction with the Eternal God. “ With Thee is the Fountain of life, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” If for a single day a man would be happy, he must devote that day in the first and highest place to Him from whom alone light, love, and peace descend. No heaven can exist without this. The first commandment there, and consequently the first law in this our training world, is, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, for God is love. Such is the chief, the essential element of heaven. The angels are all receivers of life and bliss, from Him who is their Spring.

Secondly, where love to the Lord reigns, it generates love to our neighbour for His sake. This is the distributive principle. Without this, man would be solitary and selfish. His blessings most necessarily he confined. But, if he glow with the desire to bless others, if, whatever grace, excellence, or possession, he has,

he desires to impart it to those around him, immediately the blessings of all multiply by the number of possessors, and all are made happy by the aid of each. Let us take a household of ten persons for instance. If the chief thought of each was how he could make the rest happy, how he could impart to them what he possessed of gift or grace, the result would be, that each would be ten times as happy as he could be alone. So would it be in a society of a hundred or a thousand where this principle reigned. And from this alone it may be seen how great must be the happiness of heaven, where the angels far surpass men in goodness, in wisdom, in grace, and in power, and each glows with a desire to make others as happy or happier than himself. This, then, is the second law of heaven, and he who would know how far he is preparing for heaven, should examine himself to ascertain how far he practises this holy law at home. He only who is heavenly in heart, mind, and practice, may safely conclude he is capable of forming one of the heavenly company after death.

The third great principle of a heavenly world, a world of joy and peace, must be that of harmony or correspondence between the inner and the outer sphere of things. Every one feels that there should be harmony between the principles and the position of the wise and excellent. There is a conviction which impresses itself on all minds that something is wrong when virtue suffers, and vice revels in plenty. The moral sense of mankind revolts at the spectacle of integrity and misery in close companionship, and only becomes reconciled to it by the assurance that it may be permitted for the sake of higher objects at present, but that in the end, virtue will be triumphant and happy. Heaven would not be complete without this justice, and therefore it is written, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, but I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." In the world of mind, mind is triumphant. The dress, the mansion, the paradise, and all the thousand circumstances of angelic life, are the exact out-birth and correspondence of the inner principles. These rule over all things; and hence all things are lovely without, because all things are beautiful within. Such is a faint outline of heaven. But what possibility is there of the selfish man, full of adoration and preference for his own individuality, devoted to his faults and vices even, forming one of the society in which love of God, and rejection of self, are the chief laws?

Heaven can only exist and continue from heavenly principles. Men at present have their minds formed by evil pas-

sions, and the perverted persuasions to which they give rise, more or less moderated by the influence of the germs of a heavenly nature implanted during man's formation by the Lord. Hence by man, as he is, only such a society as we see can be formed—a noisy, struggling earth, not a heaven. How strongly this is exemplified in cases of emigration we have already noticed. Many who pass away from an old country, do so with aversion and disgust at its customs, habits and laws, its disorders, turmoil, and selfishness. They will go to another land, and be quite free from the vexations which had fretted and oppressed them. They will found a happy community, perhaps. They go beyond the Atlantic, but find New York is but another Liverpool. They push on further west, and come perhaps to Chicago, and there discover the spirit of greed and speculation quite as great as in any town in Europe. They pass on to where population becomes few, but among the few there is only a repetition, on a small scale, of the struggles, envies, enmities, sins and sorrows of the greater communities. And so must it be since man is the same, and so would it be for ever, without regeneration. One whom I well knew some thirty years ago, went to America from the north of England, completely satisfied that his regeneration was impossible in an old country like this, with so much to vex the mind in its manifold annoyances of Church, State, and business. He would leave the whole, and divide them from him by an ocean. So would he in the Arcadian scenes of a new world grow undisturbed in the heavenly life, and thus fulfil the end of his being. He had not, however, been long away, before his letters informed his friends that all was not perfectly smooth in his new home. He was astonished that vexations occurred even there. He thought he had left everything perplexing behind, but he found one annoyance after another thickened upon him until he was feelingly bound to admit, that the greatest source of difficulty he had overlooked—he had taken HIMSELF with him. And this self he must subdue before he could bring himself into order, and thus into peace, either in the new or the old world. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." My friend discovered this by his experience, and the lesson was cheaply bought. He came home determined to act upon it, a wiser and a better man. We must be born again.

But we are told in the text, that the Most High will expect us not only to be born again, but born in Zion. We have already seen that Zion was the highest portion of Jerusalem; on one of its heights, Mount Moriah, was the temple situated, and there everything most sacred in the representative church was

to be found. It thence became the type of the most sacred states in the real Church, those of love to God from which He is worshipped and obeyed, and love to man, by means of which we seek to benefit our fellow-creatures. To be born in Zion, is to be born into these holy affections, and to live from them. And this is the great end of religion. "Above all things put on charity," says the apostle, "which is the bond of perfectness."—Col. iii. 14. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."—1 Tim. i. 5. To attain this great end of religion, all the means are given; if this end be not attained, the means have been received in vain. In vain have we learned religious truths, in vain have we diligently attended service, in vain been attentive to meetings, in vain have we read, in vain have we disputed about particular views of doctrine, in vain have we been eloquent preachers, or had faith even such as it was. The Lord will say when he writeth up the people, This, and that man was born in Zion. If not born there, no matter where else he was born. For happiness he must be born in Zion. "Though I speak with the tongue of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all FATH, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. Oh! that this lesson were learnt by all. Too many are they who set out on the journey of religion, but never reach Zion. They come to the gate of knowledge, and spend a long time dallying about that. They then retire, and fall in with worldly companions, and waste their time in earthly pursuits alone. They then start again, and come to the gate once more, but still make no resolute exertion to go through, or if they do so, it is only to read on both sides of the road the directions to the golden hill of Zion; but instead of advancing they remain reading them, singing them, praying them perhaps, and then retiring until another opportunity, when they go the same round with little variation. They resolve, resolve, then re-resolve, and die the same. O that they would advance to the heavenly state of charity and love! They would then be conjoined with angels. "Ye are come to Mount Zion," said the apostle, "and to an innumerable company of angels." They would then taste angelic joy, and realize somewhat of heaven upon earth.

Yet, how often do we find persons who have been professors of religion for years, but are bitter, keen, condemnatory, unamiable, full of accusations against others, assuming they are

faultless. Such persons never attain the end of religion, which is charity. Charity suffereth long, and is kind, but they have no patience even with those who are striving to do their best. Charity vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up; but they are especially desirous that any little affair of theirs should be particularly appreciated. Charity doth not behave itself unseemly, and seeketh not her own; but these push forward their pretensions in season and out of season. Charity is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. But these take offence at trifles, and attribute evil where none is intended. Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. But these take care that their neighbours' faults are sufficiently known; they deem it a public duty to let the staple of their conversation be the failings, or supposed failings, of those who come within the reach of their observation. They are not half so vigorous to publish the progress of truth, the advance of virtue, the excellencies that are manifest around them. O for that Zion-like state which is the support, the root, the foundation of every other virtue: which beareth all things: which listens with gladsome fervour to what truth teaches, having an ardent affection for it, seeking to be rejoined with what was its companion in the bosom of God, which believeth all things: which is an ever radiant centre of joyous expectation: which hopeth all things: which is full of patience, ever excusing as much as possible the waywardness of others, and bearing with opposition and difficulty for the sake of ultimate good: which endureth all things. This is the charity which never faileth; it still regards the great end in view, our Heavenly Father's will in the salvation of souls, and works on. It realizes the blessings of religion. It feels that heaven is not a vain thing. The love it knows enables it to comprehend the love of God. The happiness it experiences gives it to know somewhat of the happiness of heaven. Its own enduring character gives it unwavering assurance of the unchanging care of the Lord. He who loves God, knows God; knows His will, His kingdom, and His ways.

" Faith, Hope, and Love, were questioned what they thought
Of future glory, which Religion taught.
Now Faith *believed* it firmly to be true,
And Hope *expected* so to find it, too.
Love answered, smiling with a conscious glow,
' Believe, expect? I know it to be so.' "

The mode in which this new birth into a spirit of love is to be brought about, has been the subject of much discussion; yet it is not very difficult in itself. The Lord has implanted into every soul the germs of angelic life, an incipient heaven. These

consist of affections for goodness and truth. When in the course of human life, under the guidance of Divine Providence, truth is brought home to a man, the good which is in him from the Lord pleads for it, and disposes him to adopt it, if in the use of his freedom he determines to do so, the truth is joined with his good, and exercises an influence over his life. It is faith working by love. The more truth a man learns, and thus joins to his interior good dispositions, the more powerful is his faith, for there is weak faith, and strong faith, and the more powerful his faith, the greater is its influence upon his life, until with time and perseverance the whole man is renewed and happy. This union of truth and good in the soul is very strikingly referred to in the 85th Psalm: "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."—Ver. 11. Again: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."—Ver. 10.

It is of great importance for us to have a clear idea of the mode in which faith is obtained and increased in the soul, for it is sometimes said that faith is given in a miraculous way by irresistible grace, and that man has nothing to do in relation to it. It is the gift of God. No doubt, faith is the gift of God originally, for every good and perfect gift is from Him. But He gives it as He gives most other things, by means, and to those who are willing to receive it. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."—Rom. x. 17. The new-birth takes place as we admit the power of truth to operate within us. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."—Jas. i. 18. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."—Verses 21, 22.

The order of man's new birth is this: he receives a knowledge of the truth by hearing and reading. Whenever he reflects upon that knowledge, with a determination to practise it, light appears to his mind, and as he practises what he knows, the light increases. "The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple."—Ps. cxix. 130. God Himself is the cause, and the Word of God is the grand instrument by means of which souls are born again. And this takes place gradually. "It is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear."—Mark iv. 28. It is first as a grain of mustard seed, but it grows until it becomes the greatest among herbs, and at length a tree, so that all the birds of the air come

and lodge in the branches thereof (Matt. xiii. 31, 32). As man hears and receives the truth, he removes from himself his previous errors: as he practises the truth he removes from himself his previous evils, and the love of goodness descends into him from the Lord, so forming him into a new man. This is a change so great and so wonderful that it can only take place by degrees, even with the most earnest. We may suppose that an entire change has been undergone, when we feel very happy at a particular time, but subsequent experience will prove to us that only by little and little can the evils and errors which formed the inhabitants of our souls by nature be driven out, as it was with the enemies of Israel in the land of Canaan (Ex. xxiii. 30). As we obey the truth, more power will be given, more light, more purity, and more love. And thus we shall grow in all that is good, until the entire new man is formed, and not only formed, but increased unto the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus.

This doctrine of gradual regeneration is most important to be known by the Christian, for without it he is apt to fall into grievous errors. Instead of looking for the re-birth through the increase of truth, as he learns and loves the Word, he will seek it in enthusiastic fancies. He will suppose his work is done, when in truth it is only just begun. He will be cast down beyond measure when new temptations open to him new revelations of his being, and evils of whose existence he was unaware, although this is but what he ought to expect. The soul, to begin with, is like a world in ruins. Wildernesses and deserts exist with wild beasts prowling in them, where beautiful gardens ought to exist. To reform and regenerate man as to his whole conscious being is his life-work. And if this be performed, his life will indeed have been of the utmost value. He will have provided heaven with one blissful helper of its joy, at least, to all eternity, and what other work can be compared with that? All the operations of earth, the proudest erections by means of which the architect may dream of immortality, or the efforts of the painter, or sculptor may induce the hope for enduring fame, but these in time will perish. The soul, however, once saved, will flourish in immortal youth. It will progress in beauty and joy for ever. No wonder, then, that a work of such eternal worth, should be comparatively slow in its completion. Let us be assured, that if we are faithful in our obedience to the Word, the divine work will go on within us as fast as possible. "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the

Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."—Ps. lxxxix. 13—16. Thus, then, may we be born in Zion.

It is worthy of notice that it is written, "This and that man shall be born there." In the original it is, "A man and a man shall be born there." And by this language the twofold character of man is no doubt referred to. For as the Divine Being is Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom, so He intends man not to be regenerated as to one of his grand faculties alone, but as to both. He must be born again as to his understanding and as to his will. This is described in the Gospel by being born again of water and the spirit, or of truth and love. He who receives the grand principles of virtue and religion into his mind, becomes a man as to intellect; and when he receives them into his will, and reduces them to action, he becomes a man as to his heart. A man and a man shall be born there. And when this gracious work has been begun, the Divine Love will watch over it until its completion. The Highest Himself shall establish her. The Lord is called the Highest specially in relation to the Divine Love, because this is the inmost of His nature. All other attributes flow from the Divine Love. God is Love. His truth is the light of Love. His power is the strength of Love. His righteousness is the constant virtue of Love. His justice is the rectitude of Love. His patience is the endurance of Love. What Love will do at any time, God will do, for God is Love. Hence this divine principle is the highest. And whenever we come into the Zion state of loving goodness and truth, in heart and mind, the Highest watches over this with infinite tenderness. The Highest Himself will establish her. How comforting it is to the humble soul who fears lest the good in him may perish, lest he may succumb in some of the future trials of life, to have this divine assurance, He shall be established. The vigilance of Him whose care is unsleeping and untiring, will incessantly watch over him. Whatever may be the strength he needs, it will be given. He will never be forsaken. Every want of his Zion will be supplied. The Highest Himself will establish her.

We are next assured that Jehovah shall count when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there. And it is an interesting enquiry to ask what is meant by His writing up the people? It suggests the idea of making a final account, an exact reckoning. It is scarcely necessary to suggest that the

Lord does not keep any account-books in which a minute history of human actions is registered, separate from man himself. This idea, prevalent in days gone by, was a misunderstanding of a great and important truth. That truth is, that principles make their impressions upon the persons who practise them, write their nature upon them. Evils write their impress upon their victims. "The sin of Judah," said the prophet Jeremiah, "is written with a pen of iron, and with a point of a diamond; it is graven upon the tablets of the heart."—Chap. xvii. 1. Sin does really make a likeness of itself upon both the mind and the body of the sinner. Sensuality gives existence to vitiated and prurient thoughts, and to a coarse and bloated visage. Cunning imparts to its possessor a certain peering fox-like aspect. Insolent violence gives an inflamed ferocious expression to the features. And if these impressions betray themselves in the body, what must they be in the more plastic mind? On the other hand, the principles of virtue, purity, honesty, gentleness, holiness give also their impulses and character to both mind and body. Who does not delight in the presence and the sphere of one long familiar with the ways of heaven? The clear and gentle eye, the frank, open, and benevolent countenance, the soft and friendly voice, all speak of a spirit within, on which the divine image has been written: "Ye are our epistle," said the apostle Paul, "known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."—2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. This writing by the spirit of Christ within, proceeds, as we become regenerated from innermost principles, until the whole man is inscribed by the image and order of heaven: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God," said the Lord, "and he shall go no more out. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name."—Rev. iii. 12. God is the term which expresses especially the Divine Wisdom, and to make the Christian a pillar in the temple of my God, is to establish him firmly in the reception of the Divine Wisdom, so that he would never depart from its precepts. To write upon him the name of my God is to impress upon his highest inmost sentiments the nature of the Divine Wisdom, upon the maxims and rules of his life, the nature of the doctrines of religion derived from heaven, the name of the city New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from the Divine Wisdom

there, and upon his whole life the nature of the Divine Love, which is manifested in the glorified humanity of the Lord, "I will write upon him my new name."

To write a name in the book of life, is to form the mind into a book of Christian love, to make it a heaven within; this is being done by the Lord throughout our lives, so far as we cooperate with His Holy Spirit. But, at the last, when we pass into the world of spirits where judgment takes place, "For it is appointed to men once to die, and after death the judgment."—Heb. ix. 27, then the final lot of man is fixed. To him that hath is given, and he finally has abundance of wisdom, light, and every blessing; and from him that hath not is taken away, even that which he seemed to have. This final preparation is Jehovah's writing up of the people. They are finally numbered among the redeemed, who are seen to have been born in Zion. To assembled spirits and angels it is made manifest by the mercy of the Lord, "This man was born there." It is made manifest by the spirit of heavenly excellence which glows in every feature; it is manifest by the heavenly beauty which love has created in both face and form; it is manifest by the sphere with which he is surrounded; it is manifested by the heavenly clothes he wears. Everything then testifies that in the world this man was born again in the spiritual Zion.

The psalm closes with the instructive and cheering words: "As well the singers as the players on instruments [more properly dancers] shall be there: all my springs are in thee."

The joy of the heart is expressed by singing, the delight of the mind and life by dancing. Both are perfectly compatible with, and indeed flow from interior religion. In ancient times dancing was joined with singing in the praise of the Lord. And when it is done from gratitude to God, and a desire to make others happy, there is every reason to restore dancing to its honoured position as with singing—a handmaid to the pure joys of religion. "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let them praise his name in the dance."—Ps. cxlix. 1, 3.

In conclusion, my beloved hearers, let our constant aim be, to be born in Zion. No earthly birth or rank will avail us in the eternal world, to which we are hastening. No titles or dignities of earthly value are admitted there. All rank is entirely dependent upon interior worth and living virtue, and when we are inspected by the Great Judge, only these words concerning the celestial Zion will be music to our ears: "This man was born there."

SERMON XX.

RESTING IN THE LORD.

*"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way; because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."—
Pa. xxxvii. 7.*

We all yearn for peace. Rest and security are the objects sought universally, but seldom found. The want of interior quiet is felt by every one; it is the deepest desire of our being, but it is pursued wisely only by few, and can be attained only in the mode pointed out in the divine words we have read, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

That the Lord intended man to enjoy rest may be known by these three considerations; first, He has made it the inmost affection of every human being; secondly, restlessness is destructive to the health of both mind and body; thirdly, God has assured us in His Word, and provided in His works, that we may come into a state of rest.

It may not appear at first sight evident that the demand for rest is an interior feeling in every one. Yet very little reflection will make it plain. Under the restless garb of the busiest of mankind abides the constant desire to procure a sufficiency, that he may enjoy in peace the gratification of his delights. Look at the energetic tradesman; he seems incessantly active; he labours early and late; even in his leisure his head is busy; schemes of gain and aggrandizement incessantly employ him; one step won, leads to another; his trade is ever extending, and he pushes on to fresh conquests: nothing seems so foreign to him as rest. Yet let him unbosom himself, and you will find all this activity arises from a wish to secure the means of attaining a secure rest in his declining years. He believes he can only be satisfied in the gratification of his desires, and when he has won all that his wishes require he will recline in peace and enjoy rest. He thinks indeed in early life, often, that a very moderate

competence will satisfy him; if he gain such or such a sum, or such a style of establishment, he will have nothing else to seek, he will be satisfied and rest. This aim, however, realized, he is restless as ever. The possessor of one thousand, he desires to labour for ten thousand, and then he will be happy and quiet; this attained, he is anxious for a hundred thousand, and then it will require two to satisfy him; but still he is struggling for rest in the future. He is seeking in the wrong direction; but peace is the prize for which he struggles. He is pursuing tranquillity, but in a region of the moral atmosphere too low to find it. He is grasping at its image in the region of storms, while rest dwells with innocence in the calm, serene, blue depths of the soul. Rest can only be had in the Lord.

The soldier seeks rest even in battles. He views his foes as the disturbers of his safety, his life, or his peace: he believes it essential to his rest that he should destroy them. And if he provoke an enemy who seems now at rest, and commences a struggle of a terrific kind, still his fear is that the time will come when the enemy he is now able to cope with, will be so powerful as to overcome him, and he and his will be unable to enjoy liberty, comfort, or perhaps life. To prevent this he enters upon the most fearful conflicts; his hope however is, that he shall be victorious; and as the fruit of conquest, sit under his own home-roof and spend his days in peace. Great conquerors disable kingdoms in the pursuit of rest.

"They make a desert, and they call it peace."

But these external conflicts do not confer calm confidence and heartfelt rest. Under the decent calm of outward social quiet a thousand cares may harass the soul and make it a stranger to peace. Storms of passion, innumerable gnawing anxieties, fears for the loss of health, wealth, possessions, power, place, fame, and above all, fear of death; these infest the soul of the merely natural man, and make true rest impossible; but he seeks it, he craves it; it is his inmost wish. Not however by outward, but by inward victories can it be obtained. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood," says the apostle, "but against principalities and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—Eph. vi. 12. Victory over falsehood, victory over sin, victory over self, these are the means by which alone we enter into peace.

The rest, which is the inward aim of the soul, and to which every man may attain, is foreshadowed by the contentment of little children, though theirs is the peace of ignorance, not the

peace of wisdom. They find their wants supplied and they have no cares. They have full confidence in the love of their parents, and no doubt as to their power. They have no evil intention and none of the fears which evil engenders. They attribute nothing to themselves, but all that they have received to their parents. They have no anxieties about food or raiment, and none concerning their future life. They do not covet the world's possessions, but with the few trifles which are given to them for play, they are content. They love their parents' friends, nurses, and playmates, and in this love they are happy. Where their parents are, they are confident and secure. "Of such is the kingdom of God." This state retires within as we grow older, and around it is wrapped, as we grow familiar with the ways of the world, many a fold of selfishness, worldliness, and distrust; but still the child-owned states are contained within, and constitute a centre through which the divine influence comes, when we have strayed far into darkness, doubt, and difficulty, and utters with a gentle voice from the regions of innocence, "Arise, for this is not your rest."

We may be assured that rest is intended to be enjoyed by us in this world from the circumstance that restlessness disturbs and destroys the health of both mind and body, and is therefore in contrariety to the laws which build up both. Opposites cannot come from God. The laws which create and form man do manifestly come from Him; therefore the agitation and distrust which destroy man cannot be from Him. Mark the careworn visage of the person who has no lively hope in God. Fear is ever suggesting danger and exciting suspicion. Under certain circumstances, it is well known, fear will induce suddenly all the decrepitude of premature old age or even death itself. But where these extremes do not exist, the effect of anxiety is to make the mind in a constant disturbance, to induce unsound sleep, or prolonged sleeplessness. It affects the nervous system, disturbs the circulation of the blood, the action of the heart, the breathing of the lungs, the digestion, and through these the whole body. Mental disturbances undermine the bodily structure, and when through their secret sappings carried on for long periods, the body at length falls a victim to serious disease, it is often supposed to be afflicted by God; would we more truly examine ourselves, we should find the true cause to be deep in our absence from, our resistance to, and in our want of God. Divine Mercy seeks to alleviate the effects of our incessant cravings and cares, which are so destructive, by drawing the mantle of night over us for many hours in the twenty-four;

laying our selfish propensities to rest ; pouring refreshment into the mind, and health into the body, and thus restoring us from the wear and tear of our wakeful time. Oh no, our diseases are not from Him. In Him is our help. Were man in order, he would live without disease, and without disease die. Taking a wide range over our history and our hereditary connexion with our ancestors, and their evils ; our mental connexion too with evil beings, and our reception of their influences, it may truly be said, "our sins and their consequences" are the deep causes of all our sorrows. "Out of the mouth of the Most High, proceedeth not evil and good." Fly then from restlessness and distrust as the enemies of the soul and the enemies of health. Rest in the Lord.

We are invited, by frequent calls in the Word, to rest on the Divine Love and Wisdom. Our text is an instance of it, and the whole psalm, of which it forms a portion, is a chain of golden truths all tending to the same counsel, and full of the same assurance. "Trust in the Lord, and do good, so shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him ; and He shall bring it to pass." "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in His way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down ; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." "But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord : He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them. He shall deliver them from the wicked, because they trust in Him."

All these invitations and assurances are full of consolation, and are intended to lead us to cast all our care upon Him who lovingly cares for us. In the New Testament, our blessed Lord gives this tender address to all the children of sorrow ; "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me : for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." The blessed effects of thus going to the Lord, and resting on Him, are most salutary and delightful. Care flies, anxiety ceases, calmness takes the place of unrest, and an orderly progression in virtue is felt, which brings us daily more and more into harmony with all that is good. As we ascend in purity, we ascend in intelligence and wisdom. We have meekly accepted the divine call to rest on Him, and learn how true are the

sacred words, "The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way." As we abide, tranquilly resting in His divine will, all that is heavenly advances and grows within us, and we have a foretaste of angelic peace.

But when thus invited to trust in the Lord, we find obstacles arise. We cannot for a time repose entirely on the divine assurance. We are wanting in love, and therefore are wanting in having faith. We cannot yet rest in the Lord. Let us examine our real or supposed reasons.

We feel ourselves to be very weak, and our evils to be very strong. We fear we cannot entirely overcome them. Or if they do not trouble us much just now, we fear they will. They keep us from the Lord. We fear to go to Him with all our hearts, and we fear that as we are He will not receive us. But why is all this? The Lord Himself invites us to rest in Him. He assures us He will give us rest. His love for us is infinite, and infinitely tender; and it is to strengthen and bless us that He invites us. Why should we hesitate? He who calls to us is the Being who has followed His children through all their wanderings, still with the same grand object to save them from sin and sorrow; and He has saved in every age and nation those who have trusted in Him. Nay, it is that all-gracious Being who shewed His love and condescension to us by becoming a man for us. He lived, and died, and rose again as the apostle said, that He might be Lord of the dead and the living (Rom. xiv. 9). Talk of our sins being strong, and our fear lest if they do not now, they will at some time overcome us. Why it is the Lord of heaven and earth, who invites us to confide in Him. His strength, who supports the universe, is surely sufficient for us. It is He who overcame all hell in banded opposition when He redeemed the world. Surely, we need not fear that He will be powerful enough to save us. Besides that is His very object. He invites us to rest in Him, and lay our selfhood aside that He may redeem us from all our iniquities, and impart to us perfect peace. And what He says, He will undoubtedly perform. Rest, then in the Lord.

But, we sometimes forget the important lesson imparted in the words immediately following in our text, "wait patiently for Him." It is the attendant of our very imperfect knowledge of spiritual things that we are impatient. We wish to have our desires gratified quickly. We are not disposed to wait. We have very little knowledge of the texture of the soul; but we surmise that whatever needs to be done in it can be done shortly and sharply, and we are anxious not to wait. In this, however, we only shew our

yet imperfect confidence in the Lord. We wish Him to work in our manner and in our time, and not according to the laws of His own divine order. Did we really feel that He is too good not to take the very best mode of helping us; too wise not to know the most perfect method; and too powerful not to be able to do whatever His love and wisdom dictate, then we should indeed ever say, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

In bodily sickness, which has greatly wasted the frame, or in the healing of a wound, we are aware we must wait patiently for a perfect cure. We know that the multitudinous parts and fine textures of the body need time for their complete restoration. And could we see the spiritual body diseased by sin; full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, as the prophet expresses it, we should doubtless perceive the necessity of "waiting patiently for Him." We should not be discouraged, but confide. "It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."—Lam. iii. 26.

But the divine words, "Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him," involve something more than a calm repose on the Divine sufficiency. He rests in the Lord who relies on the Lord's laws. "This is the love of God," says St. John, "that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous."—John v. 3.

It is most important that we carefully observe this. A person often imagines he loves God, when he is only pleased with the sentiment of loving God. He may imagine too that he rests in the Lord when he is pleased with the idea of reposing beneath the protection of an Infinite Father and Friend. But this is very far from the requirements of real religion. The love of God, as a principle, is the love of His laws, of His wisdom, and of His ways: a love manifested by our obeying them when they are unpleasant to us equally as when they are agreeable. There is more love displayed by far when we prefer the Divine Will to some darling preference of ours, and do our duty under difficulties, than when we seem to ourselves to glow with emotion in worship. Many do this latter who are slow to take up the cross and follow the Lord. Yet, only, in works of love are divine principles established in us. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

As it is with loving the Lord, so it is with resting in the Lord. He rests in the Lord who confides in His laws, in His teachings, and in His promises. This, at times, will entail

sacrifices. In the varied occurrences of this life of training and discipline, it not unfrequently happens that some great advantage appears to be attainable by a departure from the law of right. If we would rest upon selfishness and worldly love for this occasion, and close our eyes upon the Lord, we should become suddenly rich perhaps, or suddenly powerful. And unless we take the short road of unprincipled gain, we shall lag behind others in the struggle for fortune. We are strongly tempted to enter upon the wild race of greedy speculation, and forsake the just path of righteous dealing and slower profit. By dashing dishonesty we shall clutch sudden riches, and we can quietly regulate our spiritual duties at our leisure. But no, the voice of duty and of conscience says, "Rest on the Lord; wait patiently for Him." Rest upon His principles; rest upon His justice. Wait patiently for such rewards in life, as the divine laws will give. Whatever is more than this cometh of evil.

The lust of becoming suddenly rich, is one of the most prevalent evils of the present day. It gives rise to wild and dishonest schemes, to reckless speculation, to a restless mania for anything which promises extraordinary gain, and ultimately to wide-spread ruin. There underlies this a desire for self-indulgence, an aversion to healthy, plodding industry, and work for our neighbour's good. We wish not to render uses to others, but only to make them subservient to ourselves. Such a course is replete with anxiety and with danger. We rest not in the Lord, but in ourselves. We have no peace, but an ever agitated mind. We walk on hollow ground, and fear every moment it will sink with us. Thus is a painful uncertainty our constant companion, and not unfrequently insanity the result. Oh, how much better would it be to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him! The gain may in such case be slower, but what of that? We are performing uses, and we love to perform uses. All the real necessities and comforts of life are supplied, and what want we with more? "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—Luke xii. 15.

Let us in all these things rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

But some are prepared to confide fully in the Lord in relation to spiritual things; in their natural affairs, however, they have painful misgivings. They see wicked men prosper. They see prosperous vice often honoured. They find themselves sometimes in straitness and difficulty, and these things grievously try them. It was so in the Psalmist's time: "I have seen the

wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

We should never forget that this world is not our perpetual home; it is but our training place. The Lord refuses us some indulgence in wealth to prepare us perhaps for higher blessings. He is good in what He refuses, as well as in what He gives. More men can safely bear the temptations of poverty than the temptations of riches. Better privation for a time, to be succeeded by everlasting wealth, than riches for a time, to be succeeded by everlasting poverty. We should feel assured that Divine Mercy does all things for the best. He has eternal ends in view, and if He does not give us precisely what we want, it is because He has some better thing in store for us. It is not for lack of power to give us all we wish. "All power is given unto Me," the Lord Jesus said, "in heaven and on earth."—Matt. xxviii. 18. If He therefore has not given us riches and rank, it must be because He sees it would not be for our eternal good. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Be assured all might is in the hands of our blessed Redeemer, and His love is as great as His power. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Resting in the Lord, implies its responsibility as well as its trust. He who hangs down his hands, and does not use the powers he at present possesses, does not rest in the Lord. Trust in the Lord, and do good, and thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Our future grows out of our present, and only by wisely and diligently using the powers we have, do we walk in the path of Divine Providence, and prepare for the blessings Providence has in store for us. Some persons are ever dreaming, and pining for a splendid future, building castles in the air, but nothing on the solid earth. There is no harm in sketching a plan for future progress, if we are not withdrawn thereby from present duties. But, on the contrary, if we are allured from the duties of to-day, by the projects of an unrealized phantasy ever fleeting before us, the injury is very great. We should do our present duties in the best possible manner, and trust in the Lord for the result. The present is in our power, the future we dream of may never come. If we do our best now, using every talent we have, we are certain to be in the best condition to receive any future good that may await us. If we are not energetic now, but propose to be so at some distant period, we are probably only encouraging some lethargic tendency in our nature, which is disposing us ever to procrasti-

nate. "Work while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Be earnest now, be diligent now, be trustful now, and be happy now. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." Work and wait.

We shall be encouraged to this reposing upon the divine care if we reflect upon the proofs of it, which are visible around us. We are told that when the celebrated traveller, Mungo Park, was in one of the remote wilds of Africa, and had been plundered by some barbarians of the trinkets which he had been accustomed to barter with the natives for food, he became so deeply discouraged that he lay down with the feeling that he was forsaken of God, and there was nothing for him but to lie down and die. But on the spot where he lay there was a beautiful specimen of moss, and his eyes fell upon its exquisitely-formed leaves, and thoughts came into his mind, like the whispers of an angel—God must have formed that; His love, wisdom, and care are here; and surely He who has provided for that moss, will much more care for me. Hope sprang up within him, and shortly help came. A negro woman found him, took him in, found him a mat for the night, and food to assuage his hunger. He learned a practical illustration of the promise, The Lord will provide. Let us look around. Not a blade of grass grows by its own contrivance. Not a flower blooms, but from divine bounty. And yet how richly is Nature stored! How lavishly is every thing provided with the means of being. "See the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." He who provides for the grass and the flowers will much more provide for us. "Rest in the Lord."

"We see no more in Thy pure skies,
How, soft, O God! the sunset dies:
How every coloured hill and wood
Seems melting in the golden flood:
Yet by the precious memories won
From bright hours now for ever gone,
Father, o'er all Thy works we know
Thou still art shedding beauty's glow;
Still touching every cloud and tree
With glory, eloquent of Thee;
Still feeding all Thy flowers with light,
Though man hath barred it from our sight.
We know Thou reignest, the unchanging One, All-just!
And bless Thee still, with free and boundless trust."

Why look for other examples of divine love? We are ourselves in every respect the most striking instances of it. We came into the world naked, helpless, and ignorant. We did not even know our wants, much less how to supply them. Yet so admirable were the arrangements of Divine Providence, that

our every want was abundantly supplied. Food was created for us of the best kind, and at the best place. Cradled on the mother's lap, surrounded by parental love, who is so well cared for as the helpless child? If danger were around, the baby would be first the object of every one's attention, and its safety would be first secured. By girding it with a circle of love, divine mercy has secured for it every other blessing and defence. Oh, that we never forgot this lesson of divine care, thus given at the outset of life, but remembering how well we were provided for, when we could do absolutely nothing for ourselves! Ever be prepared with the conviction that—

"He who hath helped us hitherto,
Will help us all our journey thro'."

Rest, then, in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

Let any one look back over the events of life, and he will have sufficient evidence of the goodness of his Heavenly Father to convince him that he need never despair. We cannot see the ways of Providence beforehand, but we can discern them after their work has been completed. We can stand, as Moses did, in the cleft of a rock, and see, though yet but dimly, not as on the top of a rock, but as in a cleft, the glory of the Lord from behind.

In contemplating this, how many instances of wise arrangements, of unexpected aids, of deliverances from danger, of comforts in sorrow, of evil overruled for good, of light breaking forth in darkness, and of joy in grief, shall we not have to recount? Joseph is a remarkable illustration of this, given in the Holy Word. When he was rudely thrown into a pit, and left to die, how forlorn must have been his thoughts! He was far from home, and from help. The only persons he could, from their relationship, have fairly expected to give aid, being those who had left him to destitution and death. Yet help came. Foreigners from a far land were brought by at the right time, relieved him, and took him to the right country for to work out the merciful designs of infinite love for him and his. Then, again, in the still worse sorrow, when he was cast into prison by a powerful noble, on a vile charge, supported by one whose word was not likely to be doubted, how dark all must have seemed! Even his good name was not left to him. He was not only in confinement and poverty, but in disgrace. No one spoke for him. He was no doubt considered a detected hypocrite. Yet the Lord, we are told, was with him, and gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison. Whatever Joseph did prospered. Even dreams were sent for his help, and the means that had been taken to crush him were the very things which led to

his exaltation. He was raised from the dungeon to be second in the land. A striking encouragement to all, to rest in the Lord.

It is often not difficult to admit the overshadowing presence of Divine care, and the all-penetrating influence of Divine Providence as a doctrine, but it is not always so easy to acknowledge it practically, and in our own case. Yet this is the very thing wanted. The doctrine only descends as a source of strength, purity, and consolation, when we recognize it in the application to us, and in every circumstance of life, the sweet and the bitter.

"The good are better made by ill,
As odours crushed are better still."

It cannot be that He who so tenderly provided for our little bodies when we were infants, and our influence was extremely small, will now forsake us when we have connections, dependents, and relationships, wide-spreading for good or for ill. Let us not talk of Divine Providence in great matters, but in small. All great things are made up of small. What is small when considered in its consequences? Mountains are made of atoms, oceans of drops. A signature incautiously given, nay, even a shake of the dice, may entail loss of fortune, and horrors too terrible to think. A word, a look even, may be potent far and wide for weal or woe. It must be, therefore, that these are all under the watching care of unerring goodness and wisdom. Not a hair of our heads falls to the ground but our Heavenly Father knoweth. And, if so, why should we ever despond, or ever repine? What He does, He does from love and wisdom, and what He permits, He also permits from love and wisdom. The Divine Gardener knows best what His plants require to prepare them for paradise. Let it be ours to feel assured that He ordains all good possible for our happiness; and only permits such affliction as is necessary to lead us to purity and peace.

Sometimes we think we have no doubt of the divine kindness, if men would not interfere with it. We are satisfied that every provision has been bountifully made for the good of man and for continued well-being, but that evil men come between the Creator and His creatures, and deprive men of what their Maker's love had designed for them. Evil men enrich themselves at the expense of the many, and keep multitudes depressed for individual gain. And, no doubt, there is much truth in this. But we must never suppose that this, also, is not under the supervision of the Lord. Our text says, "Fret not thyself be-

cause of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." The prosperity of the wicked is often the only means of making them useful to society. Outward success will often stimulate them to make gigantic efforts for human improvement, and they cannot benefit themselves without benefitting others. Such are the admirable laws of Divine order and wisdom, that selfishness is compelled to minister to the public good, and this willingly. The millionaire who seeks still to increase his wealth, must spend it in more extensive arrangements for increased manufacture and wider commerce, and thus he sends a blessing to thousands of cottages, as well as multiplies the productions of nature and art. Instead of being a pest to the earth, which he would be if he were wicked and useless at the same time, he is made to be an instrument of extensive good. Fret not thyself because of him (though an evil doer) who prospereth in his way. He is also under the benign care of Him who will make the best of him. The Lord will either lead him from his evil in His own merciful way, or overrule it for good. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity."—Ver. 1. Grieve not at their prosperity. It is short-lived, and a poor exchange for the everlasting riches which they despise. Rest thou in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. No one can really injure thy lot but thyself. Thou art guarded with a Father's care, and none can do thee real harm.

We are not, however, to remain undisturbed only when we see the wicked prosperous, and confide that all things are under the guidance of unerring wisdom, working for the universal good, and for ours; but also to remain trustful and unshaken even amid the wicked devices of the evil. Fret not thyself because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

The devices of the evil are of two kinds. There are snares in relation to our worldly prosperity by wicked men, and snares against our spiritual prosperity by wicked spirits. Both these beset our path everywhere. And in sight of their number and their malignity we sometimes quail, and fear that we shall hardly escape some of them. Philip Quarles expresses them very quaintly, but very truly:—

"The close pursuers busy hands do plant
Snares in thy substance; snares attend thy want;
Snares in thy credit; snares in thy disgrace;
Snares in thy high estate; snares in thy base;
Snares tuck thy bed; and snares surround thy board;
Snares watch thy thoughts; and snares attack thy word;
Snares in thy quiet; snares in thy commotion;
Snares in thy diet; snares in thy devotion;

Snares lurk in thy resolves; snares in the doubt;
 Snares lie within thy heart; and snares without;
 Snares are above thy head; and snares beneath;
 Snares in thy sickness: snares are in thy death."

This catalogue is true and terrible; but what then? The All-wise watches over us; the Omnipotent guards us. If we rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, live on His principles, walk in His ways, we shall be perfectly safe. The simplicity of the straightforward, baffles the cunning of the malignant. They walk on their own pure course, live in the light of truth, and the cunning devices of the wicked fail of themselves. We need not trouble ourselves about them, but go straight on, doing what is right, and all will be well. "Whatever be the device, our souls will escape, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare will be broken, and we shall escape."—Ps. cxxiv. 7. Let us not be faint-hearted, nor discouraged. Let us not fear a thousand schemes of earth or hell, but fearlessly walk in the path of purity, and the result will be safety and blessing.

Lastly, let me address my brethren of all ages, states and circumstances, in these divine words, "Rest in the Lord."

Young man, be not ashamed to adopt as your guide the laws of virtue and religion. Rely upon them, they will save you from a thousand errors, a thousand dangers. Let them guide you in your reading, let them guide you in the choice of your companions; and, above all, let them guide you in your marriage. Make all your arrangements on these divine principles, and you are safe.

Parents, rest in the Lord, in training your children. See that their education is conducted upon the principles of truth and justice. Let them be trained to be really upright, truthful, and loving. Avoid, in your life before them, whatever would sanction low motives, improper and unprincipled habits or conduct. In all things rest in the Lord. Fully confide, that thus resting on true principles, the results will be happy. Wait patiently for Him.

Troubled Christian, in your sorrows, trials and temptations, fear not. "Rest in the Lord." It may be that your afflictions are bitter and prolonged. You have prayed that they might be removed, and hoped they would soon be over, and still they continue. Weary nights and weary days you have, and you see yet no termination. Do not suffer your faith to droop. Rest upon the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. Keep your soul tranquilly reposing on the laws and promises of the Divine Word. Be assured that in the end all will be found to have worked for the promotion of your true well-being here and here-

after. Cling to the great principles of practical love to God and love to man. Suffer, if need be, but never depart from faith in the Lord Jesus. Rest in Him, and wait patiently for Him.

In sickness, rest upon the Lord. You may have to endure pain, watchings, wearisome days and nights. Still trust, confide, love. Wait until infinite love restores your health again. Wait patiently for Him.

Dying Christian, fear not: rest upon the Lord. You are merely going the road to which you at birth were destined. Nature trembles, but the spirit will enter into greater liberty and life. Divine mercy has promised to accompany you in your passage into eternity. He whispers to your heart, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

"Shudder not to pass the stream!
Venture all thy care on Him!
Not one object of His care
Ever suffered shipwreck there."

One more application of these divine words, and we have done. It is evidently a law of divine love that man should work. Every one has talents to perform some useful part in the universe, and should seek his happiness in doing it. Each use is a channel, as it were, down which bliss from the Lord will descend in proportion as it is faithfully done. Every one in his sphere should be a worker, and in doing this, there is great reward. The Lord says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Essential Divinity had been active before He had assumed our nature for creation, and now that He had descended among men He was active in the Humanity for our redemption. All the angels are ministering spirits. The law of labour is the law of love. Without it, the body remains weak and unsolid, and the mind stagnates. A wandering, restless languor, oppresses the spirit that shrinks from its allotted portion of the world's work. A distaste of life comes from inactivity and idleness, which increases by time, until the wearied and self-tortured spirit rushes into some vicious exertion against others, or seeks refuge in self-destruction. How much better would it have been to rest in the Lord: to take our allotted labours as a gift and a blessing from Him. If we strive to do it earnestly and well, it will be to us a fountain of life and joy. In doing God's commandments there is great reward. We should never seek to fly from our allotted portion of the world's labour, but strive to do it well. The opposite feeling induces often anxious desires to become suddenly rich that we may escape from our post of duty as early as possible: a speculative gambling spirit of

greediness and an impatience with the ordinary rewards of honest trade. We do not rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him : we are all on fire to catch at some enormous gain, and to become magnificent by magic.

This often induces dishonesty, both in trade and in trust. To escape from present responsibilities to the fancied bliss of living in splendour and doing nothing, a man will strive for unrighteous gain, and betray the trust which confiding friends have placed in him. And when we bear in mind the prevalence of the doctrine that a man can go to heaven by believing only, that a life of virtue is not necessary, but he can be fitted for its everlasting joys in a few moments, we need scarcely wonder that every now and then the world is shocked by great acts of fraud, and we meet everywhere, almost, and in everything, petty adulterations. O how different a world this would be if we were content with the certain and happy rewards of right ! These may seem to come slowly, but they come fast enough for all reasonable demands. No man we are assured, who cultivates his powers and talents, makes the best use of his time and ingenuity, seeks all the information of which he is capable, and works these out in a genuine and earnest performance of his duty, will fail of his reward. It may need patience, but it will come.

Our Heavenly Father gives us not only His blessings in heaven, but as far as the great end of our existence will permit, a happy existence in this life also. "Trust in the Lord, and do good," says the Psalmist, "and thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." O that this spirit of resting satisfied with our place and our work in the world were universal ! A man will sometimes find he can do something else promising more important results than what he is now engaged in, and he should no doubt change to that. But having discovered what he can do best, let him labour in that for love. Let him rest satisfied with his calling, depending that in conscientiously carrying out his usefulness, he will be truly blest. If he find obstacles to overcome, difficulties in himself and difficulties in his business, let him wait patiently, and work actively, and these will disappear. Let him be conscientiously assured that he is really performing a use in the world, and then pray to the Lord daily for love, direction, and power, to do it well. Let him rest assured that full ability will be given him, and in the performance of his daily duty he will find his whole life become a life of religion. Every act will be an act of piety. The old adage, to work is to worship, will be realized in him. The

Lord's will realized in him, will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, and every blessing that Divine Mercy can impart will be his. Let us all, then, thus rest upon the Lord, and wait patiently for Him. When our selfish desires would induce us to quit our posts in the world, let us persevere. When temptations would urge us to quit duties that at present are somewhat irksome, although in the highest degree useful, let us patiently rest where we are; trust that He who gave the work will make it easy. Let us all, in our several vocations, "Rest upon the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."

SERMON XXI.

THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOUSE.

"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 plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."—Isa. li. 2—5.

THE last days—the last days—what can be the meaning of these expressions? The common reader has long been accustomed to associate with them the end of all things; the resurrection of men's dead bodies, and the burning of the world. They have been words of terror and dread; yet nothing can be plainer than that they are here the words of hope, and peace. The emblem presented to the mind is that of a glorious temple placed upon a mountain towering above all others—a point of beauty and glory to which every eye should look, every heart should turn. The nations of the earth flocking towards it, and cheering each other by the way. These being taught how to walk, to obey, and to judge, they should return to practise the arts of peace alone, and make universal light, the constant attendant of universal integrity and love. "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

One thing is quite certain: this prophecy is quite incompatible with the idea of the destruction of the world preached by many, and so it is with a large number of others.

The prophet speaks of the highest worship of the Lord, and of the most fervent love to Him. But men have been taught to consider the last days as the period of apostacy, vice, and delusion. The prophet speaks of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of men; of peace, virtue, and wisdom, as then being the

practice of mankind. There is no room here for "the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds." Which is the truth? Let us investigate.

And, firstly, let me remark, that the heart-cheering view of the world's progress to a final state of regenerated excellence and happiness, is not confined to this passage; it is the crowning disclosure of every prophecy, and of the whole Book of God. The wonder is, that this has been so completely overlooked.

In the eleventh chapter, the prophet speaks of a period when "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."—Ver. 9. The sixtieth and succeeding chapters to the end of the prophecy, unfold an era of light, and love, and righteousness, which has never yet been realized, and when brought to pass, would undoubtedly supply the best reason for the world's continuance.

The latter chapters of Ezekiel are the description of a renovated world. The prophecy of Daniel, after describing the different dispensations of religion under the images of the different parts of the great image which the king saw, from the head of gold, to the feet partly of iron and partly of miry clay, declares: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall NEVER BE DESTROYED: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it SHALL STAND FOR EVER."—Chap. ii. 44. In a succeeding prophecy, it is said of the Son of Man, when brought to the Ancient of Days, representative of the Son and the Father being no longer divided in human minds, but united as one Divine Person, "And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which SHALL NOT PASS AWAY, and his kingdom that which SHALL NOT BE DESTROYED."—Chap. vii. 14.

The prophet Joel, after describing the glorious state of the last days under the images of Judah and Jerusalem restored, says: "But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."—Chap. iii. 20. Zechariah says: "In that day there shall be one king over ALL the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name One."—Chap. xiv. 9.

In the New Testament there are similar declarations. Thus in the Book of Revelation: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his

Christ; and he shall reign for EVER AND EVER."—Chap. xi. 15. The last two chapters are entirely taken up with a description of a glorious church, under the image of a magnificent city of gold and pearls, the New Jerusalem, which should descend from heaven, and bless the earth, and there the vision ends, leading certainly to the inference that this would be the last and permanent state in the earth's career; this was the crowning work of Divine Providence; the discipline of ages had all prepared for it, and it would endure for ever.

We shall certainly arrive at the same conclusion if we consider the condition of the earth, or of the human mind. Who that knows anything of the discoveries of science can suppose that the earth is exhausted as a worn-out thing, or that such exhaustion is possible? Look at the new revelations of the earth's riches which knowledge has brought forth in the last fifty years, the wonders of steam, of chemistry generally, of electricity, of light! It is as if new worlds had been discovered in the former one, and no one who knows anything upon the subject dreams that we are more than just entered into these grand avenues of intelligence. We have only recently begun fairly to know somewhat of this earthy house of our Father; and is this the time, as some have vainly surmised, for Him to destroy it? Nay, we now know that knowledge is infinite, and each fresh discovery enlarges our view of the greatness, goodness, and wisdom of the Divine Maker. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." Can we then suppose that the scene of these wonders shall cease? Surely, the conclusion is far more rational, which implies that if the divine mercy has continued the earth's existence, through ages of cruelty, darkness, and folly, that now when lights have been opened to guide man to higher views of all things, of himself, of the world he inhabits, and of the God who made both, He will continue it, in these its nobler conditions, to be a training-place for heaven. And, indeed, we may surely ask, Why destroy the earth at all? what evil has it done? It is a glorious world. It is full of beauty, full of wisdom. Let us but do our duty, and we shall find the world a scene of comfort and peace, of abundance and blessing, such as we now but faintly anticipate.

The same conclusion will come back to us if we regard the human race in its past and present conditions. It started well, but soon began to decline. Since this declension began, the race has multiplied, and spread in all directions. Through weary ages experience of all kinds has been gained, but chiefly experience of the bitter fruits of wrong. Now, however, all

feel and confess that a new influence has set in; a new age commenced. The multitudes are being taught, and they are thinking. The appliances of science, and the goodwill of the leaders of men, are operating to bring the blessings of each to the door of all. The cheapening, and thus the extension of literature, and the purity and elevation of its tone; the unexampled supply of Bibles as the head of all the means of real progress; the yearly increase in the number of schools, and the constantly more urgent efforts of the promoters to obtain greater efficiency; the means of travel, brought by the rail within reach of every one; these, and a thousand other influences are incessantly at work assailing ignorance, prejudice and brutality everywhere, and saying practically to every one, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee; for darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord has arisen upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." But can we for a moment suppose, that these new and wonderful operations of Divine Providence would have been begun, unless they were to be carried out to completion? Can we imagine that these blessings will, after all, never reach the great mass of mankind, who are equally endowed with faculties for improvement with those who already are generally enlightened? Is not God the Father of all, and must He not will the elevation and blessing of all. We think so. Will He then arrest and extinguish the daily widening circle of light and love, while yet it is in its infancy? Surely not. All rational reflection points to the probability, and even certainty of the fulfilment of the sacred promise concerning the Messiah, "Of His dominion and peace there shall be no end."

But, again, comes the question, What then is meant by the "last days?" The answer is at hand. The last period of a dispensation is its "last days." When one religion is near its end, and another and a purer has begun to spread itself, then is the time meant by "the last days," and kindred expressions. The last days of the Jewish religion were when the Christian began. This is evident from a number of passages. The apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the *last days*, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Here, the apostle describes those as the last days, although they were nearly two thousand years ago. Paul speaks in the same manner: "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." In the same style, he calls that period the end of the world: "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in *the end of the world* hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."—Heb. ix. 26.

Again: "Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends of the world* are come."—1 Cor. x. 11. John speaks in the same style. He says, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."—1 John ii. 18. From these instances it is easy to perceive that the phrases "last days," "end of the world," "last time," and others, have no reference to the termination of the material globe, much less of the entire universe, but only to the end of the Church—the moral world. It comes to its last days, when unbelief and hypocrisy so far prevail, that its genuine principles are no longer operative. The only power that can check evil among mankind, is the power of religion. Faith grounded in love conquers sin; nothing else will. But when faith itself has become corrupted, and no longer speaks out its Master's will, but becomes an excuse for disobedience and worldliness, then the Church in which this has fully taken place becomes worthless and expires. This is the end of that world. When, however, one church is expiring, the Lord always provides another. When the old world is passing away, the new world is coming in. In the "last days" a sham religion expires, but a new religion is born; hence, then, in some places of the Scriptures, the "last days" are spoken of as a time of ruin; a period of the sun being darkened, the moon not giving her light, and the stars falling from heaven; while, on the other hand, they give us glowing descriptions of the brightness, the freshness, the order, and the blessings which are the attendants of the new time. The one class relates to the expiring church, the other to the rising church; neither to the natural, but both to the spiritual order of things.

The prophet Isaiah, then, looking onwards through the vista of ages, describes the character of the New Church, which would appear in the last days of the old one. Let us endeavour to ascertain that character.

In the first place, it is distinguished by THE LORD, or Jehovah, dwelling in a house. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established at the top of the mountains." And yet it is said of the New Jerusalem, "I saw no temple therein." The

solution of the two probably is, that the house of Jehovah in the New Church is not in the church, nor of the church, but is the Humanity of God Himself far above the church, "For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."—Rev. xxi. 22. In the New Church, the proper temple of Deity, is no place on earth, nor is any one place, as a place holier than another, or more than another, the dwelling-place of the Most High. Places of instruction and prayer there will be, but these will not be more hallowed than places where labour is performed from holy motives. The presence of Jehovah would not be confined to certain spots as His dwelling-place. His spirit would pervade the whole. Justice and judgment would be the habitation of His throne. Wherever these were, there would He be. But the House of His Supreme Abode would be His Own Humanity. "The Lamb would be the Temple."

The truth now opening upon us from the text is a most important one. May the Lord enable us to see it correctly. Send out thy Holy Spirit, adorable Saviour, to guide us on this subject into all thy truth.

Before the Lord's incarnation, He manifested himself only by angels to the spiritual sight of men, and flowed through angels in His communications to the human race. He was God in first principles, infinite Love and Wisdom in essence. He dwelt in light inaccessible, which no man had seen, nor could see. He was the Father whose voice no one had heard, and whose shape no one had seen (John v. 37).

In such circumstances God may be the object of awe and reverence, but not of clear knowledge and ardent love. The imperfect revelation of God, which could take place under such arrangements, could only be answered by imperfect love and imperfect worship. Jehovah, to the Jews, was necessarily rather a dreadful God than a loving one. And, as that people sank lower, God seen through the states of their own souls, He would seem more and more awful and terrible. The real nature of God, as a Father, could not be known. The extent and absolute character of His tender and saving love could not be appreciated until He assumed our nature, and presented Himself as "God manifested in the flesh." Then, as this Humanity was the Humanity of God the Father, it was called His Son; and though it was, externally, in all respects like another Humanity, still it was the proper Human Form of "The Everlasting Father." And, because of there being no human father, even in the Humanity, there was an interior nature, making it capable of being glorified and perfected, so as to become God of God.

Therefore, says the apostle, "Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—Heb. i. 8, 9. This Glorified Humanity is, therefore, the house of Jehovah, the temple of the Father. In it He has perfectly revealed Himself as Divine Love Incarnate. His words, His works, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, all reveal love to His creatures, and love to the uttermost. In this way the Son brought the Father to view. The Father was in the Son. Thus, only, could men honour the Son as they honour the Father (John v. 23), and not be guilty of idolatry. For He is the outward person of the Father. "He and the Father are ONE."—John x. 30.

The dimness and deficiency of all former churches arose from their having no perfect revelation of God. They saw Him only through mediums more or less perfect. What He was in Himself they could but surmise. And their surmises would be certain to have much in them taken from themselves. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself," it is said in the Psalms (l. 21). And when the Deity a person worships is a reflexion of his own passions and principles, he cannot rise to a higher standard. Man never dreams of becoming better than his God.

The churches before the Incarnation were then necessarily imperfect and weak, and incapable of bringing the human race to a high standard of heavenly excellence. And even the first Christian Church, as it saw the truth, that Christ was God Himself in the flesh, with some degree of faintness, in consequence of its being so great and so strange to men at that time, they lost hold of it, and framed the doctrine of three divine persons, leaving the Father out of the Son, and in an incomprehensible majesty distant from, and above the Son. Then came the play of human fancy and feeling. The revealed God they knew, and knew that He was love itself, and mercy itself. The other God they framed after their own imagination, and conceived Him to be awful, swift to anger, and terrible in His wrath. And thus room was made for those fearful dogmas which have issued from Rome and Geneva, of the different modes to be pursued to allay the wrath of this God out of Christ.

In the new dispensation, however, "God in Christ, Jehovah in His temple, the temple of His body" (John ii. 21), would be the great feature, the distinguishing glory. The mountain of the

Lord's house, or Jehovah's house, should be at the top of the mountains, and above all the hills.

This revelation of Jehovah in His Humanity meets precisely the interior demands of the soul. The heart asks for a Divine Man. Hence the tendency, so manifest in every age, to deify heroes and heroines. The incomprehensible gives no comfort. We want an Immanuel, God with us. In becoming incarnate, then, and glorifying His Humanity, the Eternal for ever met this want.

"Amazing mercy! love immense!
Surpassing every human sense!
Since time and sense began!
That man might shun the realms of pain,
And know and love his God again,
His God became a man."

The Humanity then became the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to the human race. "No man could come to the Father but by Him." He is the grand vine, from which all Christians should, as branches, receive their life. "He is the head of all things, and by Him all things consist."—Col. ii. 10. "In Him dwells all the FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY."—Col. ii. 9. The glorification of the Humanity, so that it became fully a divine Human Form, is the peculiar doctrine of the Lord's New Church. The Sabellians, and many early bodies of Christians, probably the great majority, maintained that the Father Himself was incarnate in the Lord Jesus, because, as they believed in one God the Father, and that God became incarnate to them, it followed that Jehovah Himself became incarnate. This has occasioned it sometimes to be said that, in reference to the Deity, the doctrine of the New Church was but a revival of Sabellianism. But this is a mistake. The Sabellians knew nothing of the glorification of the Lord's Humanity, so that it also became divine. And this constitutes the especial glory of the New Church doctrine. In the changes which the Humanity underwent during the Lord's life upon earth, analagous to those man goes through during his regeneration, we see the reason for all those varied utterances of the Saviour which have so much perplexed the uninformed reader. Sometimes, the Lord speaking of being able to do nothing of Himself: at others, as having all power: sometimes praying to the Father; at others, saying, "that he who sees Him sees the Father." Crying to God as if He had forsaken Him on the cross, and suffering Thomas to hail Him as God and Lord afterwards. These changes, precisely similar to those which man undergoes in the trials of the regeneration, are all explained by the doctrine of the Lord's glorification which

accounts for them all, and enables the thoughtful Christian to have a view embracing all that the Scriptures teach respecting God; and all that the soul needs. While in the glorified Human the Godhead stands forth comprehensible, fully revealed, and fully known. We have no God anywhere out of the Lord Jesus. There is, there can be, no further or superior revelation of the Father, since He was the Father in person. The prophecy is fulfilled. "A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; and the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken."—Isa. xxxii. 2, 3.

A Man, who at the same time is divine, alone can fulfil these gracious promises.

O if we would only attend to the sublime doctrine of Jehovah drawing near to us, and becoming a man to connect us to Himself, what a light it would throw over the whole of the divine dealings with us, and over the history of man! Either Jesus is God, or that which was intended to be the clearest revelation of God by Him, has led to the most stupendous and inveterate idolatry. But no; the prophecies declared that Jehovah would come into the world; that God would manifest Himself to man; that the knowledge of the Lord would cover the earth; and these predictions were surely to be fulfilled: and the Man who could call Himself the Bread of Life, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light of the World, the Resurrection, the First and the Last, the root and the offspring of David, the possessor of all power in heaven and on earth, must be a Divine Man. If Jesus Christ were not God, the more He drew men to Himself the more He drew them from God. But it cannot be. Christ is the wisdom of God, the power of God revealed and accommodated to men. "The glorified Son must all the angels of God worship."—Heb. i. 6. "He is God over all, blessed for ever." The Deity the soul needs and seeks is found in Him. Love unutterable is there. Wisdom unimpeachable is in Him. Power ever present, ever potent, ever flowing from mercy, is in Him and from Him. He is at once the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, "the King of kings, and the Lord of lords." And when once the soul embraces Him as the All in All, a sweet calm comes over it, a holy clearness and confidence, which results from having found an Almighty Friend. The Humanity made divine beams with every blessing for us, and the heart rises in grateful adoration to the Everlasting, who has revealed Himself in the Prince of

Peace. "The mountain of the Lord's house rises above the top of the mountains, and above all the hills."

The mountain here, as elsewhere, in a good sense, corresponds to love to the Lord, the highest love of the soul. The mountain of the Lord's house particularly represents the love of the Lord in His Divine Humanity. This is said to be above the mountains, because these correspond to the affections we have for the Lord in His general character. We love Him as Creator, as Ruler of the Universe, as Provider, as God of all mankind; but when we know Him as Jesus our Saviour, in that character He is dearest of all. He is brought near to us; as tenderly caring for us; as stretching out His arms of protection and invitation to all who are weary and heavy laden, and saying, "I WILL GIVE YOU REST." What would creation have been to us without redemption? And what would redemption for the world have been without our individual salvation? The love of Him as our Saviour must tower above every other love, whether to the Lord or to our neighbour, whether mountain or hill.

The correspondence of mountain, the highest part of the earth, to the love of the Lord, the highest principle of the mind, yields lessons of the utmost interest and importance when we are reading and learning the Word. In the opposite sense, however, we must bear in mind it represents self-love, with all its heights of pride, vanity, and ostentation.

How beautiful is the lesson taught, when we are assured that the Lord will provide,—Jehovah-jireh, will be seen in the mount of the Lord, to this day (Gen. xxii. 14). He who has this mount of the Lord within him will always find there, in every trial and every sorrow, as if in golden letters, written, "The Lord will provide." Of Zebulon it is said, "They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand."—Deut. xxxiii. 19. Happy are they who always offer their sacrifices of worship and adoration from the mountain of love. The mountains which bring peace (Ps. lxxii. 3), and the mountain in which none shall hurt nor destroy, refer to the same holy affections. And the mountains of the latter-day glory which shall drop down with new wine (Joel iii. 18), are also beautifully emblematic of the celestial affections of love to God, yielding the new wine of cheering wisdom in abundance; the new wine of the Father's kingdom to exhilarate, to encourage, and to bless. Happy is he who in trial can say, like David, "Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand

strong."—Ps. xxx. 7. Let our mountain of the Lord's house rise above the mountains and hills, or, in other words, let the love of the Lord Jesus, the Divine Man, rise above all other affections, either to God or our neighbour, and we shall be certain of all safety and of every blessing. "He who came from above is above all."—John iii. 31.

Do we ask for spiritual nourishment? He is the Bread of life. Do we seek for illumination? He is the True Light. Do we ask for power to overcome our evils? He says, "I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."—Luke x. 19. Do we seek for peace in death? He gives it. And do we expect safety and joy in eternity? From Him we shall obtain these blessings. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10.

To this mountain it is said all nations shall flow, 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 surely the time is coming when all good men, tired of looking to an incomprehensible, unrevealed, mysterious God, will rejoice to hail the Divine Saviour as the Fountain of every blessing. "Thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the GOD OF THE WHOLE EARTH shall He be called."—Isa. liv. 6.

But they will not only acknowledge the supreme government of Him who is God, and Christ (Rev. xi. 15), "And he shall reign for ever and ever;" but they will say, He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. When the Lord opens His Word to the mind, He teaches us of His ways; and when we bring our increased light into practice, we walk in His paths.

A sad world this has been since men adopted the religion of faith only, and neglected the religion of walking. No amount of looking, wishing, dreaming, or intending, could bring us from the far-off state, in which we are by nature, to the golden city of our God, without walking. And yet, too many acted on and professed the maxim, that walking had no relation to salvation; on the contrary, all the practical religion of even good men was filthy rags. They were uninstructed in the real ways of heaven. In the beautifully simple language of our text, however, it is written, "He will teach us of his ways."

To trace the ways of Divine Mercy and Providence, is one of the most salutary exercises of mankind, and here we are taught that there shall be the fullest opportunity for it in the New

Church. "He will teach us of His ways." While the early records of the Word of God were not understood, through the science of correspondences having been lost; and while no one had been allowed to open to us the laws and scenes of the inner world; and thus the inner principles of man's existence could only be vaguely guessed at, the ways of God could only be imperfectly taught; but we are assured that in the latter days the Lord will teach us of His ways. And He has done so. We can now trace the operations of eternal Love and Wisdom with our first parents, leading them step by step, in freedom, from the innocence of ignorance to the happy state represented by the Garden of Eden. Then we have unfolded to us the progress of the fall, from man's first incipient uneasiness under the divine leading to his settling down into that carnal external state meant by spiritual death, in which he eats the fruit of his own tree of knowledge, and forfeits and quits the blessed trees of Eden. We learn, too, how the persistence in evil, and the prostitution of the early wisdom of mankind, brought those malignant floods of impiety, from which only a few were saved by the ark of a new religion. We are brought down the stream of time, and see the people of the Noatic period, who also after a time began to forget their danger and the divine mercy, becoming infatuated with the spiritual knowledge with which they had been gifted, and drunk with self-conceit. Still, however, were they watched over, their evils checked, and provision made for restoration again and again; and when no real spiritual church could exist among men, a representative of a church was formed which could continue and preserve the connection between heaven and earth until the wonderful period when God Himself should become a man, and unite for ever all things in Himself. He shall teach us of His ways; and men will learn that all His works have been done in truth. He will teach us of His ways in the Christian dispensation. How He drew men to as full an acquaintance with himself, as their dark and heathen state would permit, but there were many things to say unto them which they could not then bear (John xvi. 12). He saw that they would again fall away; that the love of many would wax cold, and iniquity would abound (Matt. xxiv. 12). But yet this falling away would terminate in a free state of the spirits of men, in which all old superstitions and prejudices would lose their hold; and the reason of mankind unshackled, would be ready to try all things, and hold fast that which is good with a vigour and fulness unknown before. Then the eternal Saviour would make all things new (Rev. xxi. 5). Then He would shew mankind plainly of

the Father (John xvi. 25). Then would the golden city, the New Jerusalem descend. Then would all good things of all ages, old and new, be gathered together, and be understood in beautiful clearness. Then would the ways of God shine with a lustre unknown before, and the nations of them which are saved would walk in the light of the holy city. The Bride, the Lamb's wife, would be adorned for her Divine Husband with a beautiful clearness and splendour of truth, for which all ages had prepared, and which would open to man the laws, the light and the peace which compose angelic bliss. Men would be led to live on earth as they are to live in heaven. "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

As a consequence of this unfolding of the wisdom of heaven, and the reception of the laws of love, it is said, the Lord "shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people."

When nations and people bring their faults under the light of divine principles, they need no other judge. In the days that are gone, selfishness was the supreme motive of nations, and the ways by which its ends could be secured their greatest wisdom. He who could aggrandize his country, at whatever cost to others, was the national hero. The greatest plunderers became often the nation's pride. Hence,

"Man's inhumanity to man,
Made countless thousands mourn."

But in the new age it shall not be so. The Lord shall be the judge, the Lord shall be the lawgiver. He shall save us. It will be a fixed principle, that, what is wrong in itself can never lead to right. The Divine Love shall be the supreme law, and its expression is undeviating justice. What are the rights of others, as well as what are our own? will be the inquiry. If there be a fallacy among the people, let it be rebuked. Let us not be swift to mark the evils and errors of others, and slow to notice our own; but let Him who knows the secrets of all hearts judge us both, for He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.

Thus will wars be extinguished; "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." All conflicts arise from the lust of dominion. O! that the time would come, when nations would cast the idea of making war upon others away from them as a thought too shocking to be entertained for a moment. War is the complex of all that is horrible; it transforms men into fiends; substitutes destruction for production; violates the fair face of nature

and civilization, and bedews the earth with blood and tears. The time, however, will come, when our prophecy will be fulfilled, despite the sad experience of late years; despite the awful troubles of the present; principles are now revealed, which in their spread, will assuredly make wars to cease, even to the ends of the earth. When men and nations have a profound conviction that evils, and especially, the loves of self and the world themselves, are the supreme curses, and entail their chief miseries upon the doers, they will shun them as they would shun serpents. We shall not then seek to impose our evils upon others, and make war to enforce them; but rather, work, pray, agonize, to extirpate them from ourselves. We shall know that a man's foes are they of his own household. A vigilant watch over these internal enemies, the lusts of our unregenerate nature, will subdue them in their strongholds, instead of allowing them to go out to ravage and destroy. "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

There are also controversial wars, which must also cease. Discussion is good; but the wars of angry religious dispute cannot be too much shunned. The effort of every inquiry should be, not to detect another's error, but to help him in the spirit of love to see the truth. Hence, the sword should be oiled when we use it, and as soon as may be, it should be converted into a ploughshare. The spear will be much more serviceable as a pruning-hook, than it ever was as an instrument of assault. They are, in other words, the truths which have detected and vanquished evils and errors, when used as swords and spears.

The sword to assail the head, and the spear to aim at the breast, represent such truths as attack the false views and the evil affections which are opposed to the Lord's kingdom. But, as soon as may be, even these should be transformed into truths to increase what is good, and to strengthen the right in those who have opposed us. To unite with others for good objects, is far better than to differ with them for matters of sentiment, which, perhaps they will outgrow; to plough with them, rather than to fight. To help them to prune their vine, by agreeing as much as possible with the truth they do possess, is much worthier than to be rigid upon points of disagreement. O may the time rapidly hasten when Christians may all see that to manifest their religion by works of use, by exertions of charity, kindness, integrity, and a loving performance of duty, is the true mode of setting forth its excellence to others. That

religion which does this best, is the best and truest religion : "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

Jacob was Israel's name in the early part of his career ; before he struggled and conquered in the night of temptation. The Christian is of the house of Jacob, while he has the knowledge of religion and faith in its doctrines, but has not yet exalted them to be the ruling principle of his life. The invitation to the house of Israel, "Come ye," is an appeal to all such to come into states of love to the Lord : "Come ye to the mountain." Strange as such an invitation would be in the letter, how beautiful and important it is in the spirit. To have a temple built upon a mountain overtopping all other mountains on earth, would be to make it inaccessible. It would be far above the regions of perpetual snow. "Come ye," in such case, would be no invitation to a blessing. But in the spiritual sense it means, come to that holy love which is the highest Christian grace, the end of all religion. Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. x. 10). Charity is the end of the commandment (1 Tim. i. 5). Come, then, O house of Jacob, elevate your hearts. Love the Lord your God above all things. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is arisen upon thee.

All our affections are now centred upon One Glorious Being, and He is One whom we can know, comprehend, and adore. Jesus, that is the name round which all glory centres. "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Philip. ii. 10.

Come then, love Him as your Creator, Saviour, Regenerator, King, in one Divine Human Person. Let this hallowed affection be exalted above every other. Crown Him, Lord of all.

"Let us walk in the light of the Lord." All progress depends on walking. "Walk in the light, that ye may be the children of light." Only by living according to heavenly principles, do we incorporate them into ourselves. However long we may keep virtuous and holy principles in the memory, they do not become ours, and us. But, whatever truth we know, let it be lived, and it becomes interwoven with the very fibres of our existence. Day by day, under the name of habits, do the influences of what we live spread over our whole being. They pervade both spirit and flesh, so that they form the mind ; they

make the life. If we have walked daily in heavenly principles, their opposites are irksome, and at length hateful. Sin in any of its forms becomes an abhorrence. "Let us then walk in the light of the Lord."

The hope of a glorious future for the earth is well-grounded, since it is ever the theme of prophetic announcement. All these bright pictures of a world governed by justice, wisdom, and peace, cannot be illusions. Humanity yearns after perfection. From its inmost heart there is a welcome given to every aspiration which breathes brotherhood and kindness to all. All the tendencies of society are upward and onward, though obstructed by ten thousand hindrances. The time must come when our text will be realized, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. But this time may be distant. And no doubt it will, for nothing grand is ever produced, except by slow degrees. Yet come it assuredly will, and it will be the crown of all the operations of Divine Providence. For this all other ages have existed, and into it they will merge. The whole world will one day, no doubt, be a grand collection of nations, regarding the Lord Jesus as the universal Lord, and so living as to produce glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men.

But the text has an individual as well as a general application. And, in this sense, we need not wait for a remote fulfilment. It will be fulfilled in our own experience. In us the love of the Lord Jesus can be elevated above every other affection to the supreme government of our hearts. We may make it the source of every joy, and of every good we do. We can awaken every affection and thought to the recognition of this blessed reign within. We can make the Lord the judge of every affection, the director of every thought. His law of love out of Zion, and His Word opened and understood from Jerusalem, may be the grand principles to which we bow. And, if this be realized, the spirit of love and usefulness will pervade our whole being. We shall, for ourselves, "beat our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning-hooks; and not learn war any more." We shall constantly have before us the things which make for peace: the cultivation of our hearts, the rectification of our thoughts, ploughing the one and pruning the other, will be our daily employ, and we shall find the blessed result, in heaven already realized on earth, and prepared for, in the eternal world.

SERMON XXII.

THE FUTURE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

"The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place I will give peace."—Haggai ii. 9.

UNDER the Jewish dispensation there were two temples, the first built by Solomon, and destroyed by the Babylonians, under Nebuchadnezzar; and the second erected by Zerubbabel, extended and beautified by Herod, which was visited by the Incarnate God. Of this latter temple it is said by the prophet, who, after the return from captivity, was exciting the people to build it, that its glory should be greater than that of the destroyed temple. The second should be more glorious than the first.

All these things were typical. The temple spiritually is the church. "Ye," said Paul, "are the temple of the living God."—2 Cor. ii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. There being two temples among the Jews, prefigured the fact that there would be two spiritual temples, two great churches among the Christians, the first and the second Christian church. The first was given to the apostles, but has degenerated into mystery and superstition; the second is the church meant by the New Jerusalem. The first would be destroyed by the spiritual Babylonians; or, those whose aim is to prostitute heavenly things to make themselves as gods upon earth, over the souls of men. The second would have greater glory than the former, but chiefly in this, that the Lord Himself would be more intimately present therein; there He would be Immanuel (God with us.) Our aim in this discourse is to endeavour to explain in what this greater glory consists. May the Lord, the source of all wisdom, illuminate and direct our minds in the inquiry, until His light shine

within us in all its brightness, and His glory may be seen upon us.

The glory of a church is its wisdom; this it receives from heaven to dispense to men. The glory of the New Church now forming by the Lord, under the name of the New Jerusalem, surpasses the glory of the former church, in the grand and beautiful character of its disclosures on all subjects, but chiefly on the following:—1. The Lord; 2. His Word; 3. The Life which leads to Heaven; 4. Death; 5. The Life after death.

The chief glory, or the chief misfortune of man in the region of thought, is his idea of God. If he has an erroneous view of the Divine Being, it meets him distressingly every where. It embitters his whole life. It poisons the very noblest springs of his being. What fearful perplexity has been occasioned by the Athanasian Creed, with its three divine persons all incomprehensible! Its declaration, that all who do not believe the Divine Trinity as it expounds it, shall, *without* doubt, perish everlastingly, has only added to the difficulty. The rationality of man has been smitten down in religion, by having an eternal Father, with a distinct Son, equally eternal, and another distinct person formed of the Spirit of the other two, each God *by Himself*, and yet there not being three Gods. Many persons, having been induced to believe this, have resigned reason altogether as not having any province in religion, and have then been led to believe anything, however monstrous;—that a thin wafer of bread is turned by a priest into the God of the Universe;—that God is a partial Being, loving the few and rejecting the many, or any delusion, however terrible, if propounded in the name of God. O how different is the view of our heavenly Father, as afforded in the New Church! He is Infinite Love, and Infinite Wisdom, in a Divine Human Form. The whole Divine Trinity is in Him, as a human trinity is in a man. He is our Father, too, as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ, that personification of mercy unchangeable, to man, however vicious; He is not a vague, indefinite Being, whose shape has never been seen, whose voice has never been heard. Oh! the heart leaps for joy, when it believingly perceives that all power in heaven and on earth is in the hands of the Saviour. The Best of beings is the Ruler of all. And this takes in all that the Scriptures have declared. It is in harmony with every text. Not one, from Genesis to Revelation, has not its appointed truth to teach in this system. Those which speak sometimes of the imperfection of the Son, and sometimes of His glorious Majesty, sometimes of His praying to the Father, and, at other times, of all that the Father hath being

His, are all explained by the changes the Humanity underwent during its glorification, as imaged in the changes the mind of man undergoes in its regeneration. And, lastly, when the states He went through temporarily for our redemption were over, we see the Lord as the First and the Last, the Being who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty (Rev. i. 8). It supplies us with an idea of our God inexpressibly tender, grand, and loveable. And this is what reason hails, when it hears it from revelation. There is in all the forms of nature such a resemblance to humanity; all things in the universe corresponding to man, from the sun, the symbol of Divine Love shining in the soul, to the soil which symbolizes the ground for receiving instruction, the seed of the Word of God: from the animals, which have all been made from the type of the human body, to the vegetables which repeat man's circulating system. All nature is human, and must have come from a Divine Human Creator; a Divine Man; in His Infinite Essence of Love, Wisdom, and Power, from eternity; whom, therefore, it is not incredible to behold descending as a Divine Man in last principles, as the blessed Jesus. This idea is clear, it is full, it embraces all Scripture and all reason, it brings all hearts to the Saviour; but to the Saviour not as separate from, or another from God, but as being God revealed, God over all, blessed for ever (Rom. ix. 5), as having in Him all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 11). Not as another from the Creator, but as being Himself the Creator (John i. 3, 10; Col. i. 16, 17; Isa. xlv. 24): not as a Redeemer separate from Jehovah the Father; but as Jehovah become our Redeemer and Saviour (Isa. xliii. 11; xlv. 6; xlix. 26; lxiii. 16): not as a Spirit separate from the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; but as Himself the Holy Spirit, whose influences of light, life, strength, and joy, regenerate the soul (John xiv. 17, 18; xx. 22; 2 Cor. iii. 17). Here all is grand, yet all is simple; all is comprehensive, yet a child can embrace it. It makes all hearts move round the central sun of heaven, as the whole starry universe is said to move round a central sun in nature. And, when the soul has thus learned in love and faith to abide in the Saviour, it feels and knows that all is well. The Lord is the Shepherd to lead equally the lambs and the sheep of his flock to every needful blessing. If they are sick and weary in soul, He will remove their sorrows. If tossed on the sea of life's troubles, and fearing they are likely to sink, they cry to Him for help; they hear His Divine voice saying to the stormy waves, "Peace be still," and all becomes calm. If from the perplexities of false teaching, the soul has become even

spiritually dead, and wrapped in the grave-clothes of absurd doctrines, has resigned itself to apathy and despair, He can raise it from the dead. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Let any one pray earnestly to the Saviour, and trust in Him, and like those of old he will be made whole, of whatsoever disease he had.

Dr. Adam Clark mentions, that in a time of great doubt and darkness, he prayed direct to Jesus Christ, and his soul was filled with light and peace. Many others have recorded the same thing. Often and often have we seen, when the true character of the one Lord Jesus as having the whole Trinity in Him has unfolded itself to the soul, the clouds of doubt and gloom which had enveloped it had passed away, and the man has gone on his way rejoicing. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."—Jer. ix. 23, 24.

The glory, then, of the latter house is greater than that of the former, in its clear, comprehensive, and assuring doctrine of the God of all ages, "the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

In the work of redemption it is especially said by the Lord, "I will not give my glory to another" (Isa. xlii. 8); and this doctrine often requires particular explanation. For many who have been led to admire and admit the views of the New Church in regard to the Person of the Lord, hesitate when without more divine persons than one; they find they cannot preserve their former doctrine of the Atonement. They have been led to think of a God made angry by their sins, but pacified by their Saviour. They feel that they cannot go to heaven as they are; but have been persuaded that they will be admitted for the sake of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which is reckoned to them when they believe. This doctrine is felt to be a comfort to those who feel the burden of their sins, and have no clear ideas of either God, themselves, or heaven. For if they had known that God Himself was unchangeably good, kind beyond a father's kindness, tender beyond a mother's love, they would have seen that He regards the sinner not from vengeance, but from pity and mercy. He cannot make the guilty happy while they remain guilty, but the penitent He receives with love, delivers from their spiritual enemies, pardons and regenerates. Thus He delivers them really from their sins, making them of a new heart

and a right spirit. He removes from them evil tempers and passions, implants in them the love of virtue, of goodness, and of truth. He makes them heavenly, and thus fits them for heaven. This spiritual work of God in the soul is a greater glory than that of creation. Creation would have been a curse without redemption and salvation. Can we suppose that our heavenly Father would do the first, the less work, and leave to some one else to do the second, and the greater? Can we imagine that this greater work really consisted in turning Him from wrath to grace,—Him who is Love itself? Let us hear Him. "I, even I, am He who blotteth out thy transgressions for MINE OWN sake, and I will not remember thy sins."—Isa. xliii. 25. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave (hell); I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave (hell), I will be thy destruction."—Hos. xiii. 14. For our heavenly Father Himself to redeem man first from the power of hell, and its infernal influences, by His work of redemption when He was in the world, and then by the power of His Holy Spirit to save His people from sin and regenerate them, this undoubtedly gives to the One All Good the entire glory which is His due. The glory of Creation is His. The glory of Redemption is His. The glory of Regeneration is His also. No glory of divine operations is given to another. We rejoice for all our mercies to be in the hands of Him who made, sustains, and rules the universe. Filled with holy faith and confidence, the Newchurchman looks up to his gracious God and Saviour, and exclaims, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."—Ps. ciii. 1—4.

Is it not glorious to know that Jehovah Himself is our best, our infinite friend, and He came into the world for our redemption? Our Maker was our Redeemer from the powers of darkness, and comes to each single soul that seeks Him to save it from the power of sin. He who believes this can, without misgiving, confide for complete triumph over sin. "I give you power," said the Incarnate God, "to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you."—Luke x. 19.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."—2 Cor. v. 19.

For this end the Lord came into the world, to overcome man's

spiritual enemies, and save the world. To make the world for ever united to Himself He glorified His human nature by sufferings and death, and ascended with it above the heavens, that from it, as a new and living way, He might for ever communicate to His creatures the gifts of His Holy Spirit.

Let any one who has been perplexed with the idea of three divine persons of different minds, and yet declared to be of the same mind, being engaged in redemption, of one being merciful, and dying to appease the wrath of another, who will not abate one jot of his demand for blood : of one professing to be rigidly just, and yet punishing the innocent for the guilty, and placing to the account of the guilty the merit of the divinely innocent. Let any one who has learned to dread God in terror at His awful vindictiveness in redemption, see that it was God Himself who from love descended to vanquish hell, and manifest in His life and in His death a love which would save to the uttermost, and he will rejoice to behold how much the glory of the latter house exceeds the glory of the former. It excels by as much as clearness exceeds contradiction, real justice exceeds injustice, and love exceeds wrath. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people."

The Word of the Lord is equally glorious as seen in the light of the New Jerusalem. It is Divine Wisdom clothed in human language. It is from the Fountain of intelligence, but accommodated to the requirements of angels, in its spirit, as well as to those of men, in its letter. In all its sacred pages, whether they are history, prophecy, parable or vision, there is a spiritual sense. The outside of the Scriptures is their least valuable part, the lowest step of the heavenly ladder. The Lord, the church, the soul, are everywhere the subjects. The creations described, treat of the formation of new principles of holiness and virtue in the soul : the journeys are divinely arranged to represent the progress we make in the heavenly life : the battles are the types of the struggles of the soul with its vices in the hours of temptation : the victories and blessings obtained, describe our conquests over self, and the inward felicities which follow. The letter teaches the Newchurchman all that it teaches another, and more even ; for he is by the spirit able better to discriminate between what is really fact in the letter, and what is only so in appearance ; and then, beside the letter, he can study and delight in the streams of living water which exist beneath. He can indeed say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; He leadeth me beside the still waters."

By reason of the wonderful character of the Divine Word it constitutes the true daily bread of the Christian traveller. In every part of its hallowed pages there is an interior wisdom, which constitutes its spirit and life. What seemed before peculiar to the Jewish history he finds is no longer so, for "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly." And all the details of the sacrifices, and the ceremonies of the Jewish law, are to him full of meaning: they unfold the particulars of a higher law, applicable to his soul, which is a living temple; his worship, which is a daily sacrifice, burning on the living altar of his heart. The Word has thus a new and everlasting interest. Every particular becomes to him sacred and instructive. He sees now the correctness of the declaration, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord of hosts."—Jer. xv. 16.

For want of a knowledge of the spiritual sense, a large portion of the Bible is, to very many of its readers, a dead record; another large portion, quite unintelligible. But with the spiritual sense it becomes a crystal covering, through which the glory shines, like that sea of glass on which the angels stood who had the harps of God. By the science of correspondences, which is the vessel by means of which we are to draw from the wells of salvation, the Word and the world too become sparkling with living light, the outbirths and the effigies of the bright world to which they lead us. In this respect the glory of the latter house is far, far beyond the glory of the former.

And, now, let us glance at the life which, according to religious teaching, leads to heaven. It is a sad reflection that in the doctrines of professors of religion generally, the conduct of men in life has a very minute place. So much has been made of creeds, and so little of life, that one is led to wonder what they can imagine, as the reason why this world, with all its variety of training, was made.

" Believe, and all your sins forgiven,
Only believe, and your's is heaven."

Thus they say, and thus they act. Hence, with the exception of some pious observances connected with attendance upon religious meetings and religious worship, there is a very slight effort to induce Christians to govern themselves by its hallowed dictates. In fact, instead of religion being a sacred spirit, to which all the rest of the soul should conform, the insignificant ceremonies and superstitions which some call religion; and the sudden spasmodic

faith of others, which they call salvation, and which they are taught to say transforms them in a moment from being black as demons, to being white as angels; these have shorn religion of its strength, and in this nineteenth century made the world as we find it, a motley mixture of noble and ignoble, true and false, selfish and disinterested; but with the dark dashes fearfully extensive. The great redeeming powers of religion have been held off by the prevalence of the dogma, that good works do not contribute to salvation, but rather tend the other way.

Religion having been severed from the world, has made a sour, narrow religion, and a bad world. The spirit of love, and the spirit of truth, like two guardian angels, should preside over every act of life, and sanctify the whole. Justice, in its widest acceptation, and religion, are the same. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah vi. 8. "There is glory, honour and peace, to every man that worketh good."—Rom. ii. 10.

A pious, earnest, useful, just, and cheerful life in the vocation for which our talents of mind and body fit us; this is the life that leads to heaven. Religion is not a round of service to be done on Sundays, but a spirit to pervade all days. Our joys are as religious as our prayers, if hallowed by a trustful confidence in the goodness of the Lord, and a desire to make all around us happy. "I come not to take your joy away from you, but that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."—John xv. 11.

Those who disregard a life of actual usefulness as the embodiment of religious convictions, and of no account in reference to heaven, overlook the fact that the will of man flows into action; his thoughts more especially flow into words. His acts, or works, therefore, more fully shew the nature of his will, than do his words, or even thoughts. If, then, his works are selfish, his will is selfish, no matter what he may profess to believe; and the will is the essential principle of man, which will eventually assimilate everything else to itself. By evils we see the tendency of the will, and can correct it by help from the Lord. Hence the importance of watching our works. Every selfish deed, every impure act, every rebellious operation tells us of the real character of our unregenerate nature unmistakably. Evil fruit comes from an evil tree. We come to the Lord in prayer and earnest supplication for a new nature, and He gives us goodness which renews the will; this becomes fixed and made our own by virtuous and loving actions. The evil nature had by daily actions

grounded itself in us under the name of habits. On the contrary, the good and the true will also become grounded in us by heavenly habits. Hence the importance of the Divine words, "He who is faithful in that which is least, is faithful in that which is much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

How strange is the persuasion that the Divine Being strictly watches an incorrect belief, which often concerns no one but the individual who has it, and affects him very slightly; but takes no notice of unjust work, in building a house, which may result in loss of life. Is the clothmaker's creed to be all important, which only induces him to number himself at a certain church or chapel; and his unjust work in his business to be esteemed nothing, which may fail to protect the poor wearer from the inclemency of the weather, inducing disease, and premature death? Can any one rationally imagine that a mother's acceptance of what she hears from the pulpit is everything, and ill-temper, neglect of duty and discomfort, which make a family miserable, are nothing? All the world might be of the same creed, and the world might still be as far from happiness as at present; but if all the world did their several works from just principles, all mankind would be happy. The world would be a resemblance of heaven. Justice is the essence of goodness; and justice to God, which requires us to love Him with all our hearts; and justice to our neighbour, which requires us to do him no harm, but all the good we can: these comprise the whole duty of man. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."—Matt. vii. 12.

Never will the world's work be rightly done until its labourers derive their motives from love to God, and love to man. The world's wildernesses will bloom like Eden, and its deserts like the garden of God, when the principles which make Paradise prevail upon the earth; when the employer of labour feels his capital, as a grand means, placed in his hands by Divine Goodness, of giving comfort and elevation to those whom he employs; and which he will use justly to make not only his work of the best kind, but his workmen intelligent and virtuous. Never will those hives of industry, our great mills, fulfil their destiny in the designs of Providence until the employers act upon the conviction that their business, bringing under their direction industrious thousands, is not only to make good cotton fabrics, but to give them the opportunity to do their part in promoting the improvement of the cotton-workers. Many have begun to act upon this:

may it become universal! The religion of the workman too is to do justice to his employer, justice to his work: to give willingly, yea, rejoicingly his hands and his heart to labour, as a noble work bringing him into the likeness of God, who works for all. Then will the labourer, while he produces outside these beautiful works which bless the land, plough the sea, or adorn our homes and persons, be producing *in himself* a virtuous, just, and lovely character, which will go with him, abide with him when he has left this temporal scene, and enter with him the higher circles of being.

Political economy is good, but it has directed all its attention solely to the production of material wealth; it requires supplementing with the science of human economy, which will direct attention to the elevation of man as the sublime end for which not only wealth, but the world itself is formed. "All religion," rightly says Swedenborg, "has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good."

Since religion has been diverted from life to creed, not only has the world's work been conducted so as to shew that the workers have been grievously influenced by greediness and fraud; but the unspeakably important duties of home life have equally fallen a prey to falsehood and wrong. Many parents altogether forget that they are commissioned by the Lord to train their children to be wise and good, and thus to lead them to live for heaven. Feeble parents, by a thousand weaknesses, daily teach their children to be untrue and insincere. They will promise what they do not intend to perform; threaten what never comes to pass; make pretences for quietness' sake of what is altogether untrue. They will beat tables and chairs when a child has accidentally hurt itself, and instead of teaching it to seek relief from patience, they give it solace from revenge. Harsh and violent parents give too often examples of passion and injustice: sowing a wind, which some day will return again as a whirlwind. O why does not a genial but a just religion, a cheerful but a truthful piety, preside over the cradle and the fireside!

How easy would it be to train a loving and a virtuous society if only the Saviour's command were justly and daily followed: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Children have a spirit of justice implanted in them by the Lord; let parents treat them justly, kindly, and firmly, and they will honour and respect them; and thus the foundation will be laid for honour to Him, who is the Great Parent of all.

To make a just boy, precisely the same principles are needed

as those which constitute a just man, and the ground is then pliant. The parents have been surrounded by every attraction which God could give them to facilitate their fulfilling of their sacred trust, essential alike to their children's welfare, and their own peace. O when will parents make it generally their aim to prepare at last to have the patriarch's blessing: "Here I am, and the children thou hast given me!" Of what value is it to sacrifice ourselves for the accumulations of means to make our children useless spendthrifts, a curse to themselves and a curse to their kind? The New Church, by directing a broad light over this portion of human life; by shewing that youth rationally spent is the ONLY way to secure a serene and noble manhood; by teaching and training the human mind to live, rather than contenting herself with teaching men how to die, shews that "the glory of this latter house is greater than that of the former."

Marriage again has scarcely been recognized in the religion of the past, as practically religious at all. It is true that the act of marriage has been celebrated in churches; but it has been regarded as a mere form, hurried over often as a thing unimportant except for its legal bearing. There has been no doctrine of marriage, no unfolding of its sublime and important uses, no perception of its being the earthly image of the union of the Lord and His Church. The absence of a rational and spiritual light in the Church, upon this great element of human life, has resulted in the great representative capitals of Europe swarming with open unchastity; while vast numbers of those who submitted to the religious ceremony, altogether fail to realize the refined and innumerable blessings of the marriage state. The New Dispensation enters largely into this sacred field. It shews that marriage is the storehouse of happiness, the nursery of heaven. The male and female sides of man have been created both in mind and body to be the natural helping sides to the formation of a fuller, noble character, than either could become alone. The man formed to receive intelligence and wisdom from the Lord, is only capable of the proper objects of marriage in proportion as he becomes intelligent and wise. The woman formed to receive goodness and grace from the Lord, only becomes truly a woman in proportion as she suffers herself to be moulded by the Divine Love, into the beautiful earthly manifestation of purity, kindness, sympathy, and gracefulness combined. She will yearn for the manly strength of a noble intellect. He will seek for the softening influence of graceful affection. Both blended together will compose a truly God-made marriage; and what God hath joined together, will be no more twain.

"Age will not cool the sacred fire,
Nor will the flame with death expire;
But brighter burn in heaven above,
A heaven of joy, because of love."

A marriage not entered upon from these principles is the most fearful form of life-long wretchedness. Notwithstanding the ceremony, the two never become one. They become more sadly and widely two; as life lingers with them in wearisome misery. But a marriage in true order, where the mind is the great object of regard, the body secondary, and the wealth the last, becomes a constantly encreasing union—a dear centre of bliss, round which in ever-encreasing abundance arise unnumbered benefits and blessings. O the glory of this latter house is far greater than the glory of the former!

And now we come to death. What has the old dispensation to say about death? It speaks hesitatingly about the soul, as to whether it is in any shape or not. What becomes of it after death it cannot tell. It sings mournfully,—

"And am I born to die,
To lay this body down,
And must my trembling spirit fly,
Into a world unknown?"

It has made so much of the body, that when it dies all real idea of the man is gone. It speaks sometimes of the good departed having gone to heaven, and the wicked having sunk to their sad lot; but this is when it forgets itself. Immediately on recollecting, it exclaims, "There is to be no judgment until the dead dust is called to life again," and as millions have waited already for thousands of years without such resurrection and judgment, so all may have to wait for millions of years yet; and in the meantime there is no information as to where they are, what they are, or what they are doing. What body is to rise? or, as the body is daily changing, whether the whole matter which ever formed part of the body is to rise? are equally unsettled questions. The Lord's coming, redemption, and victory over death, are said by the apostle to have taken away the fear of death, but in the mass of professing Christians, at present, there is at least as much fear of death as there was in the heathen world, and more than in many parts of the heathen world at the present day. This results from the prevalence of material ideas of man, and of an intense love of the world, combined with the Church having no definite teaching in relation to man or to death.

Compare this with the clear teaching of the New Church. The spirit is the man, in perfect human form. It formed the body to itself, and whatever life the body had, it had from the

spirit. The spirit lived from God independent of the body, and has remained the same, only, if the man were virtuous it is increased in perfection, while it puts off daily, by perspiration and otherwise, portions of the body, until several entire bodies have been rejected; and it will remain equally a perfect human being, after the last body is put off. Nay, the spirit will live more perfectly than before, because it will be no longer clogged by a body unequal to its wants. Its spiritual body, of which Paul speaks, will manifest its sentiments, and do its behests more perfectly than was done in the world, for it is also spirit, and partakes of the living and plastic character of love and thought.

Having known, by the ample discoveries provided by the Lord, the nature, the principles, and the constitution of the soul during life; we know, like the apostle, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. v. 1). We know, that to imagine flesh and blood inheriting the kingdom of God is preposterous (1 Cor. xv. 50). We lose nothing by death, but rise to a higher life. For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. i. 21). The husk of the man being stripped off, the kernel appears. "There are bodies celestial, as well as bodies terrestrial."—1 Cor. xv. 40. And every Newchurchman who has lived worthy of his doctrines, looks not with regret or doubt to death, but with joyful anticipation. He throws off his old coat, before he retires to his dying rest, and is assured he will awake with the vigour, the power, and the beauty of an everlasting life. He bows his head at the threshold of the richer palace of his God, then rises within, to join the company of those who have been faithful unto death, and have got the crown of life. The angels welcome him into that world, as his friends welcomed him into this, and both by appointment of the Lord. In the definite knowledge of the soul, and in the exact knowledge of the particulars of death, "the glory of this latter house is greater than that of the former, saith the Lord."

It is even still more extensively so with the life after death. Who, in the old dispensation, knows anything of heaven, where it is? who is there? or how it is? There is absolutely no doctrine on the subject. What are its joys is equally unknown. The statements of the Sacred Scriptures are only doubtfully received, because of the utter ignorance of the soul's nature. The disclosures of the seers are scarcely received, because there is no knowledge of spiritual things; and what is read is resolved into vision, or dream, which is again considered as scarcely more than

imagination. The grand scenes recorded by the prophets are not definitely accepted, because there is no knowledge of the nearness and reality of the spiritual world; and because those who are inclined to think there is a peopled heaven, suppose that it is beyond the region of the stars; though where that may be, it is difficult to conceive.

But, how definite is the teaching of the New Dispensation! The spiritual world is an inner sphere of being, filling the natural world as the soul fills the body; visible to spiritual sight, and perceptible to all the spiritual senses, as the natural is to bodily senses. In that world, the angels and spirits with whom we are connected are now. And into the realities of that world we come, when we awake after death. It is fuller of scenery, and with a greater variety of objects than this world, as it is more perfect, and nearer the source of perfection. Those who have had heaven within them, and have formed their souls to delight in heavenly virtues, are joined together into societies of their like, for in our "Father's house there are many mansions."—John xiv. 2. Into these, from the sun of heaven, the Lord flows with love, light, peace, and every blessing. Around them, He forms beautiful objects in inexhaustible variety, yet all corresponding to the excellencies and beauties of feeling and sentiment within them.

We are informed of their clothing, their habitations, their paradises, their scenery, their mode of life; and can perceive the heavenly law upon which it all depends. No statement of all those lucid revelations of the heavenly world is given, but it has a response in the inner laws of our being, and in our own experiences. It is as though the deep veil which divides the two worlds had been as much drawn as our states will now permit, to enable reason to discern the requirements of our future home, that we may undoubtedly prepare for it. And every preparation we make in accordance with these revelations, makes our hearts and homes, here, heavenly. Revelation, reason, and experience, thus conspire to shew us that the things which are not seen, are more permanent than the things which are seen. And while we dwell upon the abundant information which has been given to us respecting the eternal world, our hearts glow within us, our hopes and aspirations are brightened, and our efforts strengthened, to make earth like heaven.

We speak not now of the horrors of evil consummated, which form the dark world. Suffice it to say they are the opposites of the glories of the blessed. The wicked sink into the vile and wretched results of their own sins. Heaven is from heavenly

principles made perfect. Hell is from evil passions fully wrought out. The contemplation of the one fills us with rational delight, of the other with rational aversion. But from both we learn, that the glory of the latter house is greater than that of the former, and thus we are prepared for the last portion of our text, "In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

There has never been extensive peace in the former dispensation. Very many received faith, who did not enter into a spirit of love and charity, even in the early time. And, there is little peace, even with a right faith, as was that of the first Christians, unless the faith be filled with hallowed, humble affection. But when the faith became perverted, and men were taught to look to three Divine Persons instead of one, and imagine parts for these three separately to perform, thenceforward there was perpetual division, and no peace. Men, broken away from the God of love, supplied His place by hate, and wars, misnamed religious, and cruelties, announced that men were inflamed by the spirit of hell.

But now that the principles of the Golden Age have been restored, in this place the Lord will give peace. Trusting in, and loving the Prince of Peace, the God of Love and Mercy, the spirit breathes in the atmosphere of peace. The work of regeneration being shewn to consist in overcoming selfishness, worldliness, injustice, and every passion opposed to the divine commandments, the sources of strife are dried up. "In this place will I give peace." A life according to the commandments, a spirit in which love reigns, these are the fountains of calmness and kindness. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then would thy peace have been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

With Jesus Christ for God and King, with love as the great principle in religion, with the commandments as the laws of life, with happiness shewn to consist in inward, not in outward riches, with a heaven of love as the kingdom ever before us, with the Word in its spirit and life as our daily heavenly food, in this dispensation there must be peace. "In this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

In this dispensation, no nation will seek an advantage at the expense of another, but desire constantly to help the other. All will know that selfishness, either in nations or in individuals, is the essence of misery and folly, and is sure to result in ruin. Every man will know that justice is the only law of happiness, and will be led to hunger and thirst after justice, to pray for it, to practise it. He will desire that his brother may see the truth

which appears so valuable to him ; but if his brother cannot receive it, he will never attempt to force, for he will know that belief and will cannot be forced ; and in the wish to force his religion on his brother, he would lose it himself, for he only who dwells in love, dwells in God.

In this place, then, the Lord will give peace. And, oh, what a host of blessings is comprized in that lovely word, Peace ! It sheds a holy calm over the soul, and hushes every emotion of the heart into tranquillity. Peace, diffusing its hallowed quiet over hill and dale, island and continent, of earth. Peace, fertilizing the fields, multiplying manufactures, extending inventions, opening wide halls of education and enlightenment. Peace, the angels singing it over a reconciled, progressive, and ever beautifying world, and pointing to the still higher peace of the world to come. O ! may this latter house rapidly extend. Hasten on, glorious kingdom. Fulfil the behests of thy Lord, for He has said, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former, saith the Lord of hosts : and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

SERMON XXIII.

THE RESURRECTION OF DRY BONES.

"So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them."—Ezekiel xxxvii. 7, 8.

THE prophecy of Ezekiel is a remarkable illustration of the nearness of the spiritual world, and not only of its nearness but of many of its laws, scenes, and circumstances. The prophet was from time to time brought into the spiritual state in which the surrounding spirit-world is seen, and he saw, as he informs us in the first chapter, "visions of God." This state has long been little known among men, from the avidity with which even the Church permitted itself to be taken up with the acquisition of earthly gain and power, and turned away from spiritual things until she lost even the very knowledge of them. Yet they are most important. Without knowing that there is a spiritual sphere of things, a life-world which pervades nature everywhere, and is its soul; with which our spirits are unconsciously connected at present, but which, whenever the Lord sees fit, we may consciously behold as this prophet did; we cannot understand a large portion of what he says, or much of the experience of other prophets, whose ancient name was seers; and, indeed, very much of the experience of the world. Man is a spirit, clothed for the time with an earthly form, but with all the powers requisite, when his sojourn here is ended, to live in the eternal world. There is as the apostle says, a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. What wonder, then, that there should be indications, from time to time, of the spirit's life and the spirit's powers within us. Rather should we wonder if it were not so. And when the Lord opens the eyes of his faithful servants, to behold the scenery of the spirit-land, we should listen with grate-

ful attention, and seek to learn the meaning of the scenes described, which are always full of interest and full of wisdom.

The fact that we are living in two worlds is suggestive of the very deepest considerations. It solves the mystery of the earth's motions and its ever-abounding varied life. The earth lives because joined to a living world, as the body lives because joined to a living soul. We are united to matter as to our outer life, but as to our inner we are now living in eternity, and shall simply live on in the inner-world when loosened from this outer sphere. We have companions, too, in the spirit, as well as in the body. The virtuous soul is linked in spirit-bonds with an innumerable company of angels; the wicked plotter against another's peace knows it not; and would that he knew it well, he is but the instrument of malignant fiends "more wicked than himself." If he is exulting over his schemes of successful wickedness, in which he has obtained some sordid or unjust advantage, his invisible betrayers are rejoicing with mocking malice, that he has become their willing dupe, and is insanely triumphing in his own wreck. We stand in the sight of men, angels and demons, to work out our salvation. O may we never forget the eternal consequences which await on every act!

The law which governs all things in the spirit-world is the law of correspondences. Everything in the outer life of spirits corresponds to their inner life. The law, therefore, of correspondences, will explain all the symbols seen, and unfold the wisdom contained within them.

The object of the vision before us was twofold, natural and spiritual, temporary and everlasting. It was given in its natural meaning to comfort the Israelites with a hope of their return from the captivity in which they were, in Babylonia; and it was, in its spiritual meaning, to testify to every man's resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

After the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, there were carried away to the neighbourhood of the river Chebar, in Mesopotamia, a vast company of captives. Among these was the prophet Ezekiel. The captive Jews at first were hopeful of a speedy deliverance. But when year after year passed by, and still they had to mourn in a foreign land, they began to droop. At length they began to despair, and this vision was given to the prophet, that he might comfort them in their desolation with the promise of a return to their own country once more. This explanation is given of the vision by the Divine Being Himself, and immediately after it was seen. "Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold,

they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost : we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land : then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."—Ver. 11—14.

This explanation fully gives the scope of the literal bearing of the vision. The Israelites in captivity lamented that they were like buried men. They were not only carried far from their homes, and all their glory as a nation quite eclipsed, but they had now lost hope, they were as dry bones. They were cut off from all expectation of any return to their beloved land and homes. The Babylonish power was so great, and they had seen so many great nations fall before it, that they had not the least anticipation of deliverance, especially of deliverance in the way it came. They had no idea that they would be delivered by a Median Prince, who would first overthrow the mighty empire which had subjected them, and then not only set them free, but give them protection and money to restore their temple and city. Yet so it was. The Babylonish empire was ended by Cyrus, and in the first year of his reign he proclaimed throughout his empire, that the Jews might return. He gave them the sacred vessels of the temple again, and directed their temple to be rebuilt at the expense of the royal treasury. Daniel appears to have been mainly instrumental in bringing about this happy result. And Josephus informs us that he shewed Cyrus the prophecies of Isaiah, in which he is mentioned by name, and his victorious occupation of Babylon predicted one hundred years before he was born. Thus does Divine Providence bring about His gracious designs. And thus we should learn ever to trust in the divine means of accomplishing whatever His mercy and wisdom require to be done. "In the evening time it shall be light." Thus is it with nations, and thus is it with individuals. Let them deserve deliverance and it will come. No matter that we cannot see the way. No matter that deliverance may seem to linger, that we may be like dry bones, buried in the graves of gloom and despondency. "Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart."

The Lord opened the graves of captive Israel after they had declared that their very hope was lost ; and this same Lord can

and will restore us from the depths of difficulty and even of despair, when our penitence has prepared us for future blessing. Let our language then ever be, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for thou shalt yet praise Him, who is the help of my countenance and my God."

Before adverting to the spiritual sense of this striking scene, it may be well to notice a view sometimes given, namely, that this vision is an intimation that the bones of all the human race will at some period be re-collected and built up into human bodies again. This idea readily occurs to those who have been educated in this belief. But they should remember that this was not the belief of the Jews at this period. No prophet, up to this time, had spoken of those who had departed this life coming back for their bodies. On the contrary, all who went into the eternal world had been represented as going where they would not return. This was the case with Job: "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away," he said, "so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."—Chap. vii. 8, 9. What is it that goeth down to the grave but the body? He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. The man shall return no more to his house. He has gone to his everlasting home. In his description of death in the tenth chapter, all idea of resuming the body is excluded. "Are not my days few, cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death."—Ver. 20, 21. In another place he says, "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return."—Chap. xvi. 22.

It is true, that some have drawn a different conclusion from the words of Job, which have been given in a grievously mis-translated form in the nineteenth chapter. But let these words be correctly rendered, and they will be found in perfect harmony with the rest. It is said, "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 *though* my reins be consumed within me." When the patriarch seems to speak of worms and body, it takes the reader at once to the grave, and when he speaks of seeing God in his flesh, after that, it seems clearly to imply a resurrection of that which had been eaten by worms. But look closely at the passage, and you will perceive that worms and body, and several other words, are in italic letters, to intimate that these words are not in the original, but are

supplied by the translator. Leave these words out and you will find, then, that Job is speaking only of his grievous sufferings and his wasted frame. But he declares his trust in God his Redeemer, and his assurance that, if his sufferings were still more severe, he had no doubt that he should see God as his deliverer before he finally left his flesh; whom his eyes would behold, and not another. This hope of the afflicted one was fulfilled. God interfered as his Redeemer. He was recovered from his grievous sorrows. God vindicated His own ways and Job's integrity. He showed that the afflictions which oppress the wicked are permitted to the virtuous, for their greater purification and blessing. And then Job confesses, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."—Chap. xlii. 5, 6. The first passage declares, that at the latter end of his trial, and while yet in his flesh, God would appear for his vindication: the latter passage declares that such an appearance and vindication had taken place, and that the Lord, indeed, blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.

The uniform teaching of Job, then, was in harmony with all the revelation to the Jews, that when man went to his eternal home, the dust returned to dust whence it was, and the man would never return for it again.

David expressed the same thing in relation to his child when he died. He said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."—2 Sam. xii. 23.

The Jews, then, up to this vision, had certainly no revelation concerning the resurrection of dead bodies, but on the contrary, were taught that when men once entered into the eternal world, they never came back. Can any one suppose, then, that this vision of the dry bones, was intended to teach them a new doctrine, and yet not a word of this kind should be said? Nay, not only when we should not be told that the resurrection of dead bodies was not what it was given to teach, but when, on the contrary, we are informed that the return of the Jews was what the vision was intended to foretell. They who are determined still to drag this vision to prove a doctrine that is not only absurd in itself, but is, in fact, taught nowhere in the Scriptures, would do well to lay aside their preconceptions, and reconsider it in the light of truth.

Let us, however, now address ourselves to the spiritual bearing of the text, for in this aspect it is extremely interesting. The apostle says, "Our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter,

but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."—2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. Again: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."—1 Cor. ii. 13. This vision was, undoubtedly, a spiritual thing. It was seen in the spirit. The Holy Ghost teacheth, then, the apostle says, to "compare spiritual things with spiritual." That man by nature is spiritually dead, and needs a spiritual resurrection, is taught constantly in the gospel, and is known by every thoughtful man's experience. It is true, that in the interior nature of every man, the Lord has implanted a ground-work of what is good, an embryo-heaven, the commencements of angelic life. But this is not properly man's, until by regeneration he makes it his own. It is the Lord's abode in man. The conscious active part of the human mind, or the natural man, is in that opposition to all that is good and true, which in the Scripture is called death. "To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. viii. 6.

This spiritual deadness of the human soul is constantly recognised in the Scriptures, and the resurrection from this state, is man's grand resurrection, the great work he has to perform.

The natural man is dead to God, to heaven, to justice, to truth. Any possibility of resurrection arises from the inner man, which the Lord has implanted at each person's creation, and strengthened by heavenly influences, both from within and from without, from his childhood. But by this arrangement of divine mercy, the resurrection from disorder and sin is possible. The Lord said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."—John v. 25. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me (that is, on the Divine Love), hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE."—Ver. 24. When the repentant prodigal returned, the father said, "My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."—Luke xv. 24. The apostle says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—Eph. v. 14. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)."—ii. 1, 5. "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

All these passages shew, in the most striking manner, how truly in the light of Scripture we are dead by nature, and the absolute necessity of a spiritual resurrection. But all our experience teaches the same thing. How else is it that we are so cold to recognise the love of our heavenly Father, which yet surrounds us with blessings? How is it that we are so prone to wrong, so difficult to be led to adopt the right? How is it that heavenly wisdom is so little delightful to our minds, until our taste has become changed, while the merest folly, and often the worst pollutions, are greedily received. It is because of this depraved and deadened state of the lower degree of the soul. Let us not suppose that this is a mere figure of speech. It is an actual fact. The fibres of the soul are perverted and warped from heaven, and must by the power of the Lord, exercised for our help, be restored to order and to life.

The state of the natural mind is described in the vision before us, by the valley which was full of bones. "Behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry."

The natural mind is called a valley, because its principles, as compared with the elevated affections of heavenly love, are as a valley compared to mountains. The mountains are said to bring peace (Ps. lxxii. 3), because the exalted affections which unite the soul to the Lord do indeed bring peace; but in the valleys, fruitfulness is found, for the works which are the fruits of religion, can only be produced in practical life. All men start on their spiritual journey in the valley, and only by effort, and by prayer, ascend to higher, holier states. "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, and that hath not lift his soul unto vanity." We are all by nature in the valley, and with the multitude it is the "valley of the shadow of death." When we look round upon mankind, and mark their low and grovelling aims, their sordid pursuits, their mean propensities, we cannot but confess, mournfully, that too many not only start in the valley, but there continue, and waste their lives without even attempting to rise into the higher region of sunshine and peace. The world is to them all, the eternal world a blank.

But the valley the prophet saw, was full of bones. What are these bones? The doctrinal truths of religion, which form the framework or skeleton of man's regenerate state, round which all other virtues fix and cluster, are as bones. These are understood, where it said, "All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?"—Ps. xxxv. 10. Of the righteous it is

written, the Lord "keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."—Ps. xxxiv. 20. When the church is really flourishing, it said of the good, "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb."—Isa. lxi. 14. These bones of doctrinal truth are taught to most in childhood. They are stored in the memory, but often after that neglected. In such case, their condition is like that mentioned in the description before us, "they are very dry." You look upon the careless and indifferent possessor of the most sacred truths, and see them, if noticed at all, regarded as things of no account, and you are tempted to say, like the question put to the prophet, "Can these bones live?" Can they who hear with indifference the grandest themes, the most solemn appeals, really be awakened to their higher interests.

The desolate state of the Israelites at this season, is the type of that desolation of soul which is felt by the unregenerate, when a conviction of misery and destitution comes over it, a consciousness of being severed from heaven, and utterly forlorn, hopeless, and helpless; it sighs over the miserable scene of wrecked prospects, and a dry and arid mind. He looks around and there is no comfort, all is black and cheerless. There lie the lessons of early childhood, the doctrines stored by a father's care and a mother's love; but they have been long forgotten, "they are like dry bones, and very dry." The Bible, our childhood's book is there, once dear, but long neglected. While musing sadly over this desolation, a voice comes from heaven to the conscience, "Can these bones live?" And while we dare scarcely venture to hope for so great a restoration, again the Divine mercy speaks within us the gracious promise. "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live." Confidence is imparted to the conscience. The angel Hope takes the place of grim despair, and we go to the Word, and from it learn to prophesy as the Lord has commanded. The effects which follow this sacred prophesying are next portrayed. First, "there was a noise, and then a shaking." The noise represents the agitation which takes place in the thoughts of the newly-awakened convert, the shaking is the tremor and change experienced in the affections.

The noise induced as the first effect by the prophesying of the prophet, brings vividly to mind the conflicting thoughts which fill the council-chamber of the soul, when making its first efforts for a new life. Hope and fear, both utter their voices. Accusations and defences, encouragements and blame, oppose each other; a complete tumult of contending sentiments clash

together ; the subject in debate is, shall we arise and live for heaven, or shall we lie down and die for ever ? In this solemn assembly, there is strong excitement ; the soul's all is at stake ; evil spirits do their utmost to induce delay, lethargy, despair, anything to arrest the newly-awakened concern of the spirit. But if, on the one hand, there are enemies which seek to terrify and to seduce, on the other there are angelic friends, who are commissioned from our heavenly Saviour to comfort and exhort. Happy is he, in whom the noise is hushed by the silvery voice of heavenly friends, who take him by the hand, and help him on, as they did Lot of old, and say, "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain ; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." The noise was followed by a shaking. When the soul has determined to follow the truth, and employ its divine light to explore the affections, a discovery of their impure character takes place. We learn how selfish, how wayward, how polluted they have been. We are filled with horror at ourselves. We find we have been daily living in the practice of principles which will not bear the atmosphere of heaven for a moment. We tremble, and we determine to renounce our self-will, and all its impurities. We shake, what we now regard with loathing, from us. We tremble, but we look up to Him, who has said, "I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." This is a shaking, which is most salutary, and breaks the bonds which have held us in spiritual captivity to the earth and sin. The truth has made us free.

The next operation is thus described. "The bones came together, bone to his bone." The bones, we have seen previously, represent the doctrinal truths of religion. While they were disregarded in the soul, they lay as a confused mass in the memory, here and there, without order or connection. Now, however, the scene is changed. The soul has become earnest. It is seen that there is a beautiful harmony and order in religious truths. Each has its proper place, and takes it ; they come together, bone to his bone.

There are doctrines in relation to the Lord, these form the head of the religious system ; there are doctrines in relation to the neighbour, these are the breast ; there are doctrines in relation to the active uses of love and faith in the world, these are the arms and hands ; and there are doctrines for the duties of every-day life, these are the legs and the feet. To perceive all these in harmony, and to have thus an entire and complete religious system, is of the highest importance to our best interests.

The accomplishment of this, then, is intimated by the significant words, "The bones came together, bone to his bone."

This operation of the intellect must ever be done by those who would have a firm and orderly religion built up within their minds. It can only be perfectly done with doctrines which are true. If their bones do not fit, or if they are not earnest enough to bring them together and bind them by the sinews of a firm love of truth, there is never anything formed but a rickety and unsteady faith, devoid of the elements of strength. These are only truly then, when those two elements of firmness are present, fitness and union.

The prophet describes further, "and beheld that the sinews and the flesh came up upon them."

The Hebrew word *Gideem*, rendered sinews, would be more strictly correct if translated nerves. "He beheld, and first nerves and then flesh came up upon them." We have noticed that the moving and arrangement of the bones represent the formation of a correct and complete religious system in the soul. But system is hard and stern, as an unclothed skeleton, unless it is accompanied and softened by the presence of heavenly goodness. This goodness is represented by flesh, which is at once soft and solid. In the form of muscles it is the grand source of energy and power in the body. The soul without goodness is like a body without flesh. The nerves, which impart motion and sensation to the muscles, and by means of which all muscular action takes place, correspond to the desires for goodness, the inner affections from which it proceeds. Flesh, throughout the Word, is the symbol of goodness, which imparts at once fullness and softness to our spiritual states. "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," said the Psalmist (lxxxiv. 2). "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh" (Ezek. xi. 19): where it is obvious that a heart of flesh implies a gentle, kind, and humane heart, such as is only felt when heavenly goodness has made its abode in it. When the Jewish church had fallen into idolatry and many grievous evils, the prophet said, "The holy flesh is passed from thee. When thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest."—Jer. xi. 15. Where the holy flesh undoubtedly means holy goodness. The Lord's Divine Flesh means His Divine Goodness, the only source of good to us. Hence, He says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh

and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in Him."—John vi. 53—56.

When we receive the Divine Goodness and Truth which are, as it were, the Flesh and Blood of the Lord Himself, we are indeed in conjunction with Him, and He abides with us.

The flesh, then, that came upon the bones in the view of the prophet, represented the goodness which is imparted to the soul as it advances in its heavenly career, and seeks not only to know and believe, but to love and do what the divine commandments teach. With earnest desires it presses on to attain the heavenly life, and thankfully feels that it is becoming stronger for good, warmer in the course it daily pursues.

How essential it is that we should never forget the gentle flesh of religion, while we are faithful to guard its bones! How hard and unlovely is that character which is ever stern and exacting, but displays none of the courteous consideration for the views and feelings of others, which wins affection while it shows it. How soft is the flesh of a child, and so soft is the innocence of the true Christian,—“of such is the kingdom of God.” Except we become as little children we shall never enter there. While, then, we receive truth fairly and firmly, so that our characters have all the nerve and vigour of a faith well founded and clearly discerned, strong in its texture, and well bound together, let us always take care that the strength of the bones is only felt through the softness of the flesh. Let your faith be seen only as the framework of a living, loving, charity.

The prophet next observed that, after the preceding changes, he saw skin appear, to surround and beautify the whole. Any one who has considered the subject of that wonderful structure, the human body, will have seen how many beneficial and beautiful purposes are answered by clothing it with skin. This important organ is often undervalued, but it can scarcely be rated too highly. Both its constitution and its functions are worthy of our particular observation. Our limits, in this discourse, prevent us from touching upon the subject more than in a general manner. The skin is a most delicate and refined threefold network, exquisitely organized, and endowed with life in a very high degree. It is a magnificent tissue of innumerable minute bloodvessels and nerves, which are woven by the Creator into a matchless robe of beauty and of use. It clothes all the interior and finer textures of the body, and protects them from injury. In it all the inner powers of the body manifest themselves, and rest. It immeasurably surpasses the finest cloth in exquisite delicacy and finish, and it has this amazing feature,

placing it as a production of Divine Intelligence, unspeakably beyond all the efforts of human art, that it is the ever-speaking testifier of the emotions of the soul. The rosy tint of quiet health, and the deep burning blush of injured modesty, with all the changing hues of varied feeling, attest this astonishing action of the skin as the mirror of the mind.

The functions of the skin are threefold. It is the seat of sensation and touch. Feeling, in relation to all the ever-occurring particulars of momentary life is expressed in the skin.

Without this presence of life in the extremes we should both do and suffer much that would be utterly detrimental to health and life. By the delicacy of touch and feeling generally in the skin we are guided in our daily habits, and preserved from improprieties hurtful to our well-being. When we might injure ourselves by outer fire or knife, pain, or the dread of it, will keep us in the bounds of order. Secondly, the skin is a means of absorbing light, moisture, and other grateful elements from the surrounding objects, which are eminently useful to the preservation and beauty of the body. Witness the ruddy healthy appearance of one whose skin has the full advantage of these grand restoratives, and the pallid hue of him who toils in darkness, or in close and poisoned atmospheres. Thirdly, the skin is the grand instrument by which the waste material, which had formed part of the body, is carried off invisibly, and the body's renewal and progression are secured. When the skin is healthy and does this incessant function duly and completely, vigour and satisfaction are the results. When it is otherwise, disease in varied, often in hideous forms, and even death will follow.

I have ventured to dwell upon the now confessed importance of the skin, to illustrate what is equally important in a spiritual point of view, that is a consistent Christian life, for our outward life of virtue is the skin of the Christian character. This consists of faith and love, like minute bloodvessels and nerves, living in all the daily acts, the words and works of life. A just, a kind, and a beautiful life, is the expression of the soul's highest emotions and sentiments; it is the skin unveiling the principles within.

The life is, where the spirit's touch is felt. There, either our accordance with, or our dissent from the words and works of others, is livingly expressed. In our lives, when we associate with the good and wise, we catch their tone, we imitate their virtues, we gather courage from their examples. On the other hand, the atmosphere of vicious associates is fraught with pestilence and death. In the life, too, we perceive where we can

improve, and throw off the imperfections of former states. The thoughts and feelings of the child are thrown off by the youth; the inexperience of the youth, by the maturity of the man. The imperfections of each day, of each act, are thrown off by the advancing Christian, and new life and health are received from the fountain of good. How important, then, is the Christian's skin. Let him bathe it often in the living waters of truth. Let him sun it often in the light of interior wisdom. "And may his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven." A Christian with knowledge, and with good intentions, but without a virtuous conduct, is as unpleasant an object as a body without a skin. A life in which no true uniform consistency is observed, but is chequered by faults, which make friends earthly and angelic grieve, is like a skin afflicted with grievous sores; such a skin is dangerous and destructive to its possessor, and loathsome to behold. Good works must be done, and done uniformly. What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, "but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah vi. 8. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isa. xlviii. 18. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."—Matt. vii. 21. "Love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. xiii. 10. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."—1 John v. 3.

While, then, my beloved hearers, you look well to love and faith, the heart and the lungs of religion, do not forget those works of justice, piety and gentleness, which make the Christian skin. On the contrary, go often and hold communion with the Lord, that you may become radiant with holiness, like the skin of the face of Moses, when he had talked with God.

Our text adds, respecting these bodies preparing for life, "there was yet no breath in them." Breath, or spirit, signifies conscious spiritual life. There was an invisible, silent agency, as the prophet prophesied, in obedience to the Divine command, supplying these bones with the new forms and substance, which would constitute them men. This power was there giving them life, but there was no conscious breathing. So is it in man's regeneration. As we learn, think, and act in accordance with the Divine commands, new principles of virtue and order are formed within us. We grow in grace, we acquire a new nature; but for a considerable time we have no inner consciousness of living

a spiritual life. We have the form, and are acquiring the substance of religion; but a conscious spirituality has not yet become ours. It has seemed as if the improvement came from ourselves, with substantial changes certainly, but we know not how. We have reasoned, thought, prayed, practised, and persevered; but have not yet, or very slightly yet, an interior sense of living from the spirit of the Lord; "there is no breath in them." The appearance is, we are working out our own salvation. Hence, it is said, the nerves and the flesh came up upon them, to indicate the appearance, that our improvement comes from self-exertion. In reality, however, the Lord invisibly gives all the needful help and energy, the power comes down. To bring out our freedom, to regenerate us as men, and to make us more completely men, we are left for a considerable time to the comparatively slow growth of rational thought, consistent obedience, and constant effort, as if from ourselves, to draw nigh to the Lord, and to win His kingdom. The time, however comes, when we feel the presence and the power of heavenly life. The inward agencies of heaven, with which we have become invisibly connected, are more fully opened to us, and their holy influences come upon us like the freshness and the glow of the balmy airs of summer. Our inward love, and our outward virtue, our inward perceptions and our outward view, are filled with the breath of heaven. "Come from the four winds (the Divine mercy says), and breathe upon these slain." We find the energies of a new state diffusing themselves with vigour and delight through our whole being, and we stand up as a portion of the Lord's grand army.

In the work of regeneration, as in all other Divine operations, the order mentioned by the apostle is the true one. "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."—1 Cor. xv. 46. We should begin, as from ourselves, to "labour for that which endureth to everlasting life." In nature, growth takes place first, with seeming slowness, amid the cold chills and rains of the early year, but in due time come the glorious light, and the balmy breath of summer. So is it with religion.

It is fanaticism, and not obedience, which expects the spirit first. Magic seems to produce things suddenly, but they are mere mockeries, that delude. Nature works gradually, but the grand things she produces, are real and remain.

We cannot too strongly condemn an idea that has been extensively entertained, and been confirmed by practices in which there has been much zeal, but not according to knowledge. We

mean the persuasion that persons can be regenerated at excitement meetings, amid frantic cries and agonizing convulsive efforts. At such times reason is thrown aside, and God says, "Come and let us reason together." The passions are heated by terrible fears of the anger of a God described awful with vengeance, and then they are soothed by the notion that their excitors can give them salvation, or they can give it themselves, by a strong effort to believe they are saved. They are terrified by false ideas of God, and then supposed to be saved by false ideas of salvation. Delusions both. God is love, and infinitely desires our salvation. Evil is our foe. Self and sin are our enemies, and produce our hell. These we should dread, against these we should fight. Salvation is deliverance from sin, not from fancy. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," it is written, "for He shall save His people FROM THEIR SINS." "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the SINS OF THE WORLD." Let us ever be assured that our deliverance from our sins, actually so that we neither love them, nor do them, is the only course by which we can be really prepared for heaven. But, thanks be to Divine goodness, we all have the power to effect this. Let us use it. We shall not make a great leap, and become completely holy all at once; but we shall proceed gradually, as described in our text, and throughout the Word. We shall let truth be victorious in the conflict of thought, we shall shake ourselves from the fetters of sin. We shall come into orderly views of connected doctrine, we shall join to doctrine the charity which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; we shall surround ourselves with the skin of a consistent life of virtue and order, and we shall find that in due time, the Divine likeness upon us will be filled with the manifest presence of the breath of heaven, and to our unutterable felicity, that we can march on with the exceeding great army of those who earnestly combat all that impedes the realization upon earth of the kingdom of the Lord.

Who is there, my beloved brethren, now amongst us, who surveying his spirit, sees only a valley full of bones, and sighs not for a resurrection? Is there one who will not desire to join, in due time, the great army of angels, whose Head is the adorable King of kings, the Lord of hosts? O let this question stimulate every soul to strive. Can these bones live? Trust in the Lord Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life. He has said, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Obey His commands. Reform your lives. Read His Word. Learn from it to prophesy and obey. Then will you

assuredly find that a divine secret power will bring the scattered bones of teachings, long neglected, into harmony, and endue them with power. He will clothe them with substance, form and beauty. He will raise you to life, and give you to feel the breath of heaven. You will be added to the army of those who strive to subdue their own follies and evils first, and then combine with the pure, the wise, and the holy, in heaven and earth, to diminish affliction and distress, to expand all that is exalted and life-giving among men; and, like the blessed ones above, "to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

SERMON XXIV.

THE VISION OF THE HOLY WATERS.

"Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through, the waters were to the loins. Afterwards he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."—Ezekiel xlvii. 2—5.

THE scene which was here described was magnificent and instructive indeed. It was displayed before the spirit of the prophet, when the eyes of his soul were opened. There was a glorious temple seen before him, and out of this issued, first feebly, and then gradually increased to a mighty river, a stream of water; to image the origin, progress, and wonderful increase, of the water of life in the world. It was a wonderful scene; let us inquire into its import.

There was beheld, in the full view of the prophet, a representation of a temple, with its front facing the east: out of this, at the right side, that is on the south side of the altar, issued first, as a very small rill, but becoming at length a majestic expanse, the waters which formed the other grand object of the vision.

That the vision should be spiritually interpreted, not only arises from the apostolic rule, that of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," which he says "the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. ii. 13); but, also, from the manifest general bearing of the whole wonderful narration. The temple has a wide and grand signification. The church upon earth is a spiritual temple, in which the Lord is worshipped. All the truly good are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple

in the Lord."—Eph. ii. 20, 21. It is a delightful thought, that in the sight of their Heavenly Father all His servants, wherever they may be, and under whatever name, form a temple in which He dwells, in which His praises ascend, and where the sacrifices He delights in are offered. His holy church throughout the world doth acknowledge Him alone.

Heaven, which is the church triumphant, is, in a still more exalted sense, a temple. They who had washed their robes, and made them white in the divine truth, which is the blood of the Lamb, are said "to be before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." The same image which represents the church on earth, represents, also, the church in heaven, for heaven is the Lord's church among the blessed; and the church below is the Lord's heaven upon earth.

The temple, in the highest sense, is the glorified Humanity of our Lord, because in this, the invisible Divine Love and Wisdom, which are the essence of the Deity, peculiarly reside; and from this all blessings flow to angels and men. "Destroy this temple," the Divine Saviour said, "and in three days I will raise it up. He spake of the temple of His body."—John ii. 21. Of the New Jerusalem it is written, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."—Rev. xxi. 22.

Whether we view the temple, as presented to the spiritual view of the prophet, as the symbol of the church or of heaven, or of the Divine Humanity, it will amount to the same thing. And it is a sublime idea which is attained when we view these as one within or above the other, and all affording a grand channel of descent by which the Divine Truth, represented by the sacred water, flows down into the world.

First, from the inmost essence of the Lord, its Infinite Source, thence through His Divine Humanity, which the apostle calls "the new and living way" into heaven; from heaven again into the minds of the good on earth. It is the same stream of which the apostle John had a spiritual view, and which he describes when he says, "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."—Rev. xxii. 1. It is a view equally beautiful and correct, to conceive of the Divine Truth as a pure and pearly stream, flowing out from the Fountain of Living Waters, first being received by the heavens, and rejoicing them, and then descending into human minds, and gladdening the spirits of the good.

Its entrance into the world, its progress, and its ultimate triumphant extension over the earth, are described by this prophetic vision. We might dwell upon its grander features, and

speak of its issuing among men, from the time our Divine Lord said, "If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."—John vii. 37, 38. We might tell of the joy of its early reception, of the opposition it sustained, of the turbid admixtures it has suffered, of its renewed advance, and breaking onwards by ten thousand rills to fulfil its grand destination, until at its final triumph the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; but we prefer to speak of its individual application. Truth goes on the same, in the individual as in the universal mind. Its stages are the same; the obstacles to its progress are similar; and the triumph it attains in the regenerate is a foretoken of the universal satisfaction and blessing which will come when truth, filled with love, is realized as the purifier, the counsellor, and the peace-giver of all.

Lend me, therefore, your attention, while I endeavour to examine, for our improvement, this divine and magnificent lesson, and may our Lord open the eyes and the hearts of us all.

The prophet describes himself as being in the way of the gate northward, and being led out of this to an utter gate by the way that looketh eastward. The leader of the prophet represents the Divine Providence acting through the ministry of guardian angels. He has given His angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways. And from the cradle to the grave we are constantly the objects of angelic care, and are led, so far as we are willing to be led, by these kind messengers of love. The prophet says, therefore, "He brought me out of the way of the gate northward. The quarters, East, West, South, and North, indicate earthly positions, and how we stand in relation to the Sun. But the soul has its states answering to these, for there is a Sun for the soul as well as for the body. They who are nearest to the Sun of heaven, by the purest love to Him, are in the spiritual east, to such the "Sun of Righteousness ariseth with healing in His wings."—Mal. iv. 2. In the west, are they who are in little, or no love to Him. The south, where the Sun is at mid-day when he gives his greatest light, represents the state of such as are fully enlightened in spiritual intelligence; while the north, the region of cold and fog, represent the condition of the ignorant. The prophet was in the way of the gate northward, to represent the ignorant state from which we all commence our heavenward journey. We are all, by nature, in the way of the gate northward, when our regeneration begins. We have exceedingly obscure views of God, of duty, of heaven,

and of ourselves. We know, however, that if we continue in evil we cannot enter heaven. We have already experienced much sorrow, and we perceive that sin is its cause, and therefore we desire to repent. Divine Mercy sees us while yet very "far off," sends a messenger of love and faithfulness to assist and strengthen us, who brings us out of the way of the gate northward, and leads us about the way without unto the utter gate, by the way that looketh eastward.

Gates represent introductory truths. By these we are admitted to the higher things of the church, as by means of gates we enter a city. Of the spiritual city, the church, it is said, "They shall call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise."—Isa. lx. 18. The Lord Himself says, "I am the door, by me if any man shall enter in he shall be saved."—John x. 9. The utter gate by the river, which looketh eastward, means the most general knowledge which leads us towards the Lord, the rising Sun of the soul. This is the knowledge of the Lord as the Saviour. To be assured that the Lord Jesus is able and willing to save; that none who come to Him will be cast out: that He came to seek and save those who are lost: that He is kind and loving, and smiles upon our humblest effort to cast away our sins, and walk in the way which leadeth to life. These simple but all-important truths, form the utter gate, by the way which looketh eastward. By this gate we can enter and press on to find the Lord, who is in the spiritual east.

It is said, "he led me about, the way without, unto the utter gate." And these simple words conduct us to most interesting and important considerations. The circumstances of our outward life constitute "the way without." These are all the objects of divine care, and are made subservient to our spiritual good. "Not a hair of our heads falls to the ground but our Heavenly Father knoweth it." How often do we find human prudence baffled in its best laid plans! Unforeseen circumstances arise and obtrude themselves, disturbing our calculations, and leading to results very different from those we anticipated. "Man proposes, but God disposes." Our business pursuits require us often to change, from town to town, from kingdom it may be to kingdom. Our friends and associates are thus changed. We come into contact with new scenes, new books, new trains of thought. Our position in life is sometimes changed. We suffer afflictions in the loss of property, or in separations from those dear to us. We are led to be serious by the death of a friend. Sometimes the stroke comes sudden, as it did to Luther, who is said to have been induced to become religious by

seeing a young friend struck dead by lightning at his feet. Sometimes a season of protracted illness is the instrumentality by which we are weaned from temporal things. Sometimes the permission of complete success in our proposed schemes, gives us to see that the highly coloured fancies that imagination had pictured for us, are not realized in possession; that earth's joys, in themselves, are empty:—

“The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,
There's nothing true but heaven.”

All these changing scenes and circumstances, sometimes chequered with deep and lengthened suffering, is overruled by a merciful Providence to our highest good. Whatever the Lord permits, or whatever He ordains, is from the counsels of His love; and when the end proposed has been effected, we may look back, and see that all has been for the best.

The Israelites were often sorely tried on their journey. Hungry and thirsty their souls fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord, and He heard them, and delivered them out of their distresses. “And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”—Ps. cvii. 5—7.

It is so still. We hear the principles of religion, it may be, for years. We have listened and indolently admitted their truth, but they remain without effect. We are too much interested in the pleasures of life, or the accumulation of money; too much filled with high hopes of earthly success. But, perhaps, a severe sickness lays us low, and gives a lasting opportunity to consider the respective claims of time and of eternity. Perhaps some dear one of our family, our hopes of whom were high, is prostrated; we have watched, and prayed, and feared, then hoped and feared again. We have seen the disease silently and slowly, but surely, making way. We have watched each sigh, each breath, each turn of the feeble sufferer, to gather comfort. We have struggled with all the aid that earthly skill, and sternest perseverance, could give to avert the blow, but all in vain. The disease has triumphed; the beloved one has gone. Our wishes have been denied and our prospects blighted, but we have learned in the struggle that the value of life here has its relation to life eternal. The world is but a school, a nursery, an inn. Its sole object in relation to immortal man is, to afford him opportunity to train himself for the everlasting home, for which Infinite Love has destined him. The truths which were before only in the memory, become now lessons on which we ponder, and which give a colour to our lives. Henceforward our lives have a deeper

aim, a holier aspect. We have been led about, *by the way without*, and have come to the utter gate, by the way that looketh eastward. "And, behold, there ran out waters on the right side." The right side, or the south side, for the south side would be the right when the front of the temple looked to the east, represents *truth flowing from love*. The right side is the strongest side, and truth from earnest heartfelt love, is always stronger than truth from a mind chiefly actuated by faith. The Psalmist says, "Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."—Ps. cxxxix. 10. The truth of faith may lead, but the truth of love alone can hold us up. Our blessed Lord directed His disciples, when they had been fishing all night in vain, to "cast the net at the right side of the ship, and they would find." Spiritual fishermen sometimes neglect that divine injunction, and seek to win men to the Saviour by cold argumentation, or by dry and listless exposition, or by mere routine religion, and they catch nothing. Would they speak the truth in love, would they speak as men who know the value of immortal souls, and filled with the deepest charity, which seeks their rescue from sin and sorrow, they would often find their net filled with great fishes.

All the truths of heaven flow from love in the Lord. They are waters that come out on the right side. And, when the human soul is awakened to its highest interest and their true-saving character, it sees as the prophet saw, "Behold there ran out waters on the right side."

The next stage in the progress marked in our text is, "That when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ancles."

Our guardian angels have the power of measuring our spiritual progress. They perceive our states most correctly. They have trodden the ground before us, and their own states enable them correctly to appreciate ours. They are therefore said to have the measuring line in their hands. A thousand, signifies a complete state. It is ten cubed, or the third power of ten; that is, the number of the commandments, and as these can be taught to the simplest mind, the number ten represents the knowledge which can be stored up in the mind, with which to commence the work of regeneration. "The kingdom of heaven is likened by the Lord to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom."—Matt. xxv. 1. Again, "To a woman having ten pieces of silver."—Luke xv. 8. When a person has not only learned and reflected upon the Divine

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done because they are right. The third stage of Christian progression is that which we enter upon by being introduced into such a state of supreme love to the Lord, that every thing which comes from Him is our delight. We love His law, we love His truth, we love Himself. Perfect love casteth out fear. He is thenceforward our Father, and we feel the happiness of His children. No duty is a burden now, but in itself a great reward. We have a high interior perception of celestial things. We can say yea, yea, and nay, nay, readily to what comes before us, for our own heaven within gives us to perceive and to feel what is in harmony with the heaven of angels. Those who die in the first, second, or third of these stages of progress, enter the first, second, or third of the heavens of our Lord, for in the heavens, there is good, better, and best. These last become so pure, so wise, and so happy in the other life, that their states are ineffable, and their wisdom such as mortal words cannot tell. So testifies Paul, when describing himself as having been caught up in spirit into the third heaven some fourteen years before (2 Cor. xii. 2—4).

We have already described the state of obedience which is arrived at when the waters cover the feet. But he with the measuring line went on, measured a thousand, and brought the prophet forward, and then led him across, and the waters were up to the knees. It is a most important advance which is indicated by the rise of waters to the knees. To obey from command is good, but to open the mind to see the propriety and beauty of the command is much better. The intellect is a most important portion of the mind, and no subject is so worthy of its exercise as the Word of God. The letter of the Word is a beautiful casket, but the spirit within is far richer. The first is as the body of the Divine Law, but the second is as its soul. For a time it is a struggle to the young disciple to maintain his ground against his evil tendencies, and to stand firmly on the path of truth. Old habits are difficult to be overcome. He needs to pray that his feet slip not. In due time, however, new habits are formed by interior strength from the Lord. The yoke of his Saviour which was always easy in itself, becomes easy to him. Then his mind relieved from its struggle to keep externally virtuous, is ready for a new advance. The affection for truth becomes awakened, and we are delighted with its unfolding beauties. The Christian now becomes a merchantman seeking for goodly pearls. Each text when opened, gives him a new delight. For it should ever be remembered, that it is not the knowing of the Word alone which gives light, but the under-

standing of it. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple" (Ps. cxix. 130), it is said in our translation, but it ought to be rendered, the *opening* of thy words giveth light. A large portion of the Word seems dark indeed until it is opened, and its divine interior wisdom seen. To the awakened mind, however, now interested in the beauty of truth, the law becomes a source of constant elevation; "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The histories of the Word become grand allegories over which he delights to ponder.

The Israelitish journey is especially full of interest, for he traces in it his own history, portraying his escape from the bondage of sin, to the glorious liberty he now feels. The waters made sweet are emblems of truths once stern and hard, now exquisitely delightful. The manna from heaven he has felt in the descent of hidden gladness with which each new advance he makes is blessed. The pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, are the symbols of the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom guiding him onwards. Each battle of Israel has an importance in his eyes it never had before, for it is a delineation by the Allwise of his soul-struggles, of the attacks he may expect, and the aids he will receive to overcome them. The Gospel will have for him a deeper meaning than before; in fact, every part of the Word will be to him as a "wheel in the middle of a wheel." With joy will he draw water from the wells of salvation. Nor will it be the statements of the Word alone which will delight him. The doctrines of religion will appear in a new aspect. He will see a harmony in them unknown to him before. The Lord will appear before him as the embodiment of Infinite Love, Wisdom, and Power in Divine Human Form; Who is, Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty. He will contemplate the All-good Being forming the universe in the image of Himself, and especially man, the conscious likeness of his Maker. He will see truth teaching man how to live, that he may be happy in the enjoyment of his Creator's love and wisdom. He will contemplate the Divine plan of endowing each man with a capacity from being a little universe in himself, of appreciating and enjoying all things in the universe, and of contributing by the use of the talents, of which he has an especial share, to the universal good. He will see man, by the perversion of his freedom, coming into the experience of evil in life, following this out to the very dregs of perversity, involving himself in bondage and in misery, such as only his Creator could redeem him from. This same Redeemer becoming like one of themselves, freeing

His creatures from their spiritual enemies, living Himself the life which they should live, glorifying the form of a servant, which He had assumed, and taking it with Him high above all the heavens, as the grand link between His unutterable excellencies and His finite creatures. From this redeeming God he can see the Holy Spirit streaming down as light, love and power, to save His erring creatures. As man's paradise and all his blessings are lost by sin, he will see them regained by obedience and holiness, heaven rebuilt in the soul, and heaven prepared for after death by the same salvation. The universe originated in the Love and Wisdom of God, and all things reflect and image what these become when they are manifested in goodness and truth. Man's will and intellect were formed to be the grand receptacles of Divine Love and Wisdom, but they became cold, vicious, and dark, when they rejected or perverted these. Infinite mercy followed man into his own fallen nature, assumed it, perfected it, glorified it, and constituted this redeemed Humanity the head and spring of blessing to a regenerated race, ever increasing and increasing, multiplying in heaven, and multiplying on earth. until

" O'er our ransom'd nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain;
Redeemer, King, Creator,
Will o'er our spirits reign."

To behold all the doctrines of religion fully harmonious, and all beginning and ending with Divine Love, this brings the mind onwards in its heavenly journey. the waters are up to the knees (Ezek. xlvii. 3).

When the mind is opened thus in its second degree by the presence of an interior love of truth, its deeper perceptions are a constant source of delightful and consolatory views when reading the Word. The pages of the Divine book become to him a garden of ever-varying richness and beauty. Here are beds of varied hues of flowers, there are trees of silver leaves and golden fruits. He comes to the Word as to the Paradise of his Heavenly Father below, and he finds he can meander in its sacred walks, or sit in its blessed bowers, with ever-increasing delight. Nay, when he penetrates still more deeply, he finds it a palace of the King of kings, in which are chambers within chambers, corridors, and glorious apartments, in which he would wish ever to live. The sacred light of the golden candlestick of the sanctuary throws its beautiful gleams with richest lustre over the soul, and he feels it is good to be here. The waters have greatly risen while he has progressed in this second thousand paces; the waters are up to the knees (Ver. 4).

Sir Isaac Newton compared himself, as a man of science, to a child picking up pebbles on the margin of the ocean of truth. And this was both a mark of the humility of the great philosopher, and of his reverence and value for the truth he found in science. But the true spiritual child of his Heavenly Father has the privilege not only of finding pebbles on the margin of the holy waters, but of going through and enjoying the still-deepening stream of the river, which makes glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. But we are told, "Again he measured a thousand, and the waters were up to the loins."—(Ver. 4).

The loins are the portion of the body where the previously-separated limbs are joined. They correspond spiritually to love united with faith. And, when the mind has been so advanced in the regenerate life, that every truth we come to comprehend is seen also to be full of love, "the water is up to the loins. Our Lord said, "Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning." The apostle, also, used a similar expression: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."—Eph. vi. 14.

All truth really comes from the Lord, united to and filled with love. But we receive truth at first in a separated state; we first know, then understand, then love: at least, such is the appearance. In reality, however, love is always the secret mover of all. To realize this, we must come into a state of love. In light we see light, in love we see love.

Three persons reading the Word, each one will find in it the depth which his state will enable him to comprehend. One would look at the commands of the Word only as a guide as to what he should do or shun. He would aim at keeping them, and in his daily life, avoiding the sins which they forbid. He would frequently toil and labour, and lament at the difficulty he experienced; but he would be faithful, and at length the difficulty would disappear. "The waters would be up to his ancles." The second would reflect upon the commandments as a beautiful code of divine laws, by which evils are repressed, society is preserved. He sees them as regulations of ineffable wisdom, and delights in beholding how completely a society regulated by these pure and sacred precepts, must in a spiritual world be heaven. "The waters are up to his knees." But the man who dwells in love, beholds the same divine commandments as the expressions of the Divine Mercy and Tenderness to His creatures. To him the laws of Sinai, all divine laws, are laws of love. "The natural man," says the apostle, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.”—1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. To him who has united love to faith fully in himself, the waters, wherever he goes through the river, is up to the loins.

When this blessed state is reached, fear and doubt are left far away. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” That secret union of goodness and truth in the inner man has been attained, which realizes in each soul the divine words, “Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, my delight is in her, and thy land Beulah (married): for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.”—Isa. lxii. 4. Thrice happy is he who has attained this heaven within the soul, in which righteousness and peace have kissed each other!

Along with this entire union of love and faith within, another discovery is made. The Word is seen to be Infinite Wisdom, and therefore progression in its hallowed truths to be everlasting. Hence, the prophet continues: “Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.”—Ezek. xlvi. 5.

It has been a supposition of some Christians who have not thought deeply upon the subject, that when we enter the eternal world, we shall come into the knowledge of all truth at once, and there will be then no farther progress. But this involves a very inadequate idea of what divine truth is. What are all the discoveries which have been made by human beings since the creation of our race, but the unveilings of truth in the world of nature, and does any one find discovery exhausted? Is it not evident the disclosures of intelligence are going on at a grander pace than ever? But spirit is far more able in grasping truth than it is in uttering it. For one thought uttered, a thousand cross the mind. Divine Truth is a fountain of Infinite Fulness. Divine truth is “that true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.”—John i. 9. It is the source of all ideas to angelic and to human minds. Nay, all things that exist are the outbirths and the shadows of the infinite fulness of Divine Truth and Love. “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”—Ps. xxxiii. 6.

“Truth is in each flower,
As well as in the solemnest things of God;
Truth is the voice of nature and of time;
Truth is the startling monitor within us;
Nought is without it, it comes from the stars,
The golden sun, and every breeze that blows,
Truth, it is God! and God is everywhere.”

Light images it in all its indefinite varieties : the atmosphere in the innumerable harmonies it discloses to the ear ; the countless fragrances which offer themselves to the smell, all are faint emblems of the inexhaustible infinity of Eternal Wisdom. It is a river to swim in, but which no man can pass over.

The delight which the blessed have in the fresh and ever-brighter unfoldings of Divine Truth, is meant by the blessed promise, "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. vii. 17. Fountains! what an idea of its inexhaustible abundance is conveyed by the term. Living water, how the term conveys the idea of a sparkling, glittering, sunny, pearly, living brilliancy ; It can never be exhausted, never be passed over. The soul may swim in it for ever, but can never get beyond. And what a glorious thought is that to the lover of heavenly wisdom ! Its grandeurs will be for ever disclosing themselves to him in increasing beauty. He will never come to pause in his upward career ; never get as it were to a wall in heaven, and come to a dead stop. From glory to glory, from brightness to brightness, from blessing to blessing ; such is the career of the just made perfect. They find the wisdom which they appreciated in some slight degree here, and the truths which they found deepening with their advancing states, have become with the larger powers of their exalted condition, "waters which have risen, a river which no man can pass over."

And now, my beloved hearers, let the lesson of these sacred waters sink deeply into our minds. The temple rises grandly before us in the New Jerusalem. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple. From the right side issues out for human souls the blessed truths which come from Love Divine. Notice, the word issued. It is from a term in the original, which implies the coming forth of a very small quantity. Drop by drop, as it were, it comes out at first. And this indicates the will of the Lord, that truth should be given early in gentlest, sweetest measure to little children. Here a little, and there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, as their innocent hearts will bear it, but ever kindly led forth, to walk by the stream. Teach them early that truth is not a speculative, but a practical matter. Let them know that a man with a measuring-line waits to bring them forward. Angels are watching over to lend them aid, and to mark their progress. If they loiter or turn back, their angelic guides will be sad. If they go cheerily onwards, they will heighten the joy of heaven. Let

both them and us be well assured that our journey will be gradual. It is not a slight step which needs to be made; it is the journey from ignorance to wisdom, from selfishness, to angelic, to godlike love; from hell to heaven. We shall have our stages at which we can rest; estimate somewhat generally our progress, by finding divine truth clearer, deeper, and dearer to us than before. But we must still go on, never flag. The first thousand, must be followed by another, and that by another, until we come into the undying fulness of heavenly love, wisdom and joy; in which we can swim in the everlasting waters, and enjoy the rich fulness of their blessings for ever.

And, finally, my beloved hearers, let us for a moment contemplate our text as a divine prophecy. It reveals a future for the world, full of light and love, and grandeur. We have treated it chiefly in an individual application, as it may be realized by one person now. But it has, undoubtedly, a general application also. The waters issued forth from the right side of the temple when our blessed Lord said, on the great day of the feast, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."—John vii. 37, 38. Divine truths of a living, gladdening character, flowed forth to cheer, enlighten, purify, and bless the world. The attention of men was drawn from earthly hopes and temporal grandeur, to spiritual and eternal riches; from a temporal country to an everlasting one. Heaven was brought nearer to man by redemption. The human race, which had long been going westward, journeying more deeply into low and sensual life, were taken, by the man with the measuring line, to the utter gate, but to the way which looketh eastward. They were placed on the narrow way which leadeth to life, their faces were turned towards the Sun of righteousness. The spread of Christianity went on, the waters widened and deepened, and spread holy influences over many lands, purifying them from foul idolatries and horrid impurities, substituting the gentle reign of a Divine Saviour for the rude wild passions of brutal men. Still, on looking back over the church's history, and beholding her living waters pouring themselves among the world's impurities, we are forcibly reminded of our Divine Master's declaration, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." The water went forth, but rarely got higher than the ankles. To bring the outward life into order has been the utmost which has ever been extensively aimed at in Christian communities, and has been very imperfectly done. In the first two centuries Christians stood dis-

tinctly out from Jews and Heathens, as virtuous and enlightened, the salt of the earth. But in the third and fourth, with increased power, the love of power animated them to ungodly struggles for lordship over the church, and bitter animosities began. Some waxed cold, the light in them began to darken, and from that period they divided the Godhead, divided religion, divided the church more and more by their disputes, and at length by their persecutions, until, at length, so-called Christians far more cruelly used other Christians than ever heathens had done. A Christian heathenism set in. Darkness once more covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Religion was believed to consist in outward superstitious lying wonders, not in a living regenerated state of heart, mind and life; and holy bones, holy rags, holy dirt became the trust of men, instead of a kingdom of the Lord within them of heavenly affections, enlightened views, and just and orderly lives. The pure and brilliant waters of truth were neglected, for muddy streams kept in broken cisterns. This continued until a state was awakened in multitudes, in probably the great majority of minds in Christendom, of contempt for all that was called religion. Then came the end. And with that end the inquiry, What shall we do? Who will shew us any good? The Lord has in answer opened the living fountains again. Again the sacred waters roll, and now they are deeper. The inner spirit of the Word is opened, its interior lessons are seen. The bearing of heavenly wisdom, not on the feet only, but on the inner, higher principles of the soul is fully manifested, "the waters are up to the knees." The science of correspondences opens to us a world within the world, a world of spirit, life and beauty. The knowledge of the Lord now will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. The Lord Jesus, the God of love, His kingdom of love, His ever-expanding brightening Word, revealing and fulfilling all that prophets have foretold, these will go on, until there shall be "One King over all the earth." "In that day there shall be One Lord, and His name One." "There shall be a river to swim in, which no man can pass over."

SERMON XXV.

THE SON OF MAN BROUGHT TO THE ANCIENT OF DAYS.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—Dan. vii. 13, 14.

THERE is no subject more interesting to the thoughtful Christian than the true knowledge of the Son of Man. When the Lord had been saying many remarkable things to the people as to the suffering and the glorification of the Son of Man, they exclaimed at length, Who is this Son of Man? In the divine words before us the Son of Man is a prominent object. He is described as being brought before the Ancient of Days, and there receiving dominion, glory, and a kingdom, which will never pass away. A dominion of this kind is clearly a divine dominion; it is to be the final condition of the Church and the universe; the government of the Son of Man is a kingdom which shall not be destroyed. The reply to the questions, Who is the Son of Man? and why is that name used? involves most interesting and instructive considerations. The first reply which would suggest itself to the mind of the enquirer, would probably be, the Lord Jesus is the Son of Man. It was a name He frequently used respecting Himself, and everlasting dominion could be given to no other than to Him. But that reply is scarcely close enough, or definite enough. The Lord Jesus, in His humanity, is called the Son of God as well as the Son of Man. The question before us is, Why is he called the Son of Man? Who is this Son of Man? A reply that has been put forth by superficial teachers has been, He was called the Son of Man to shew He was only a human being; to denote His proper simple humanity; to shew that He was some mere man's son. Yet the Lord fully reproved this when He excited enquiry among the Pharisees by saying

“What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They said 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?”—Matt. xxii. 42—45.

The Son then is David's Lord, and in this scene described by the prophet He receives unending dominion. These are very far from being the characteristics of a mere man.

It may be suggested that the Son of Man means the material form which the Lord took from the Virgin Mother, and that it is called the Son of Man from its mortal derivation. But this supposition will be undoubtedly corrected if we consult the teaching of the Lord with due attention. He declares that the Son of Man descended from heaven, and was in heaven at the same time that he was on earth; that the Son of Man could be spiritually eaten and drunk; that the Son of Man exercises all judgment; that the Son of Man illuminates the mind; is Lord of the Sabbath day; and is to exercise all power and authority in the last, best, everlasting age of the world. None of these things can be understood of mere body, or of what was derived from Mary. The copious instruction given in the New Testament upon this subject makes its importance evident. It is indeed the great doctrine to be studied by any one who really desires to know His Lord. The Father, as the all-originating love from which the universe and every thing created has come, though unknowable truly, without the Son, is not an object of dispute to faith, however far off he may be. The divinity and supremacy of the Father is universally admitted. The Holy Spirit is comparatively easy to understand as the divine influence of love and light from God upon the soul of man. But the knowledge of the Son, this demands, and will reward our patient research. Who is this Son of Man?

That the Son is the name of the Humanity which appeared in the world on the incarnation of God, is clear from the fact that there is no Son mentioned in the Old Testament as connected with the Divine Being, except once in the second Psalm, and then it is evidently a prophecy concerning the Son who would in time be born, and once in the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah, where it is plainly the human nature which God the Father assumed that is meant by son and child. There is a mis-translated passage in Daniel in which the angel which rescued the three faithful servants of the Highest, is called the Son of God, instead of a son of God, but as he is called an angel further

on in the same chapter, few are inclined to dwell upon that as a proof of a Divine Son before the Lord came into the world. And, indeed, as the speaker Nebuchadnezzar is a heathen and idolatrous king, few would suppose that he would be a lucid and trustworthy teacher of orthodox views.

The natural, clear, and simple view, then, of the Son is, that it means the Humanity which the Lord, the eternal, assumed by the instrumentality of the Virgin, containing in it divine qualities from God the Father, and human nature, as we have it, with all its imperfections from the Judean Mother. The angel Gabriel said, That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Luke i. 31). The term Son implies succession and production, and hence the previous existence of the producer or Father. An eternal Son cannot have had a producer or father existing before Him, because nothing can be before what is eternal. Son implies a beginning; what is eternal has no beginning, therefore the ideas involved in the two expressions in the phrase eternal Son, are contradictory and destructive of each other. There may be a son born in time, but there cannot be an eternal Son.

In the usages of the original languages of the Scriptures the term "Son" has a very wide application. Whatever thing is produced from another thing is called its son. A bough is the son of a tree (Gen. xlix. 22); sparks are the sons of fire (Job v. 7); arrows are sons of the quiver (Lam. iii. 13). We have sons of valour (1 Sam. xiv. 52); sons of stripes (Deut. xxv. 2); sons of Belial (Jud. xx. 13); sons of iniquity (Hos. x. 9); sons of pride (Job xlii. 34). In all these instances the idea is manifestly not that of a distinct person produced from another distinct person; but any existence produced from another is called its son. So the body of a man may be regarded as the son of his soul, because it lives, and is built up from the life of the soul, and yet is not a separate person from the soul, but its covering and means of communication with the world. In like manner the Humanity with which God clothed Himself when He came into the world for its redemption, is called His Son. He produced it, formed it, clothed Himself with it. It is therefore rightly called His Son. He was not, however, separate from His Humanity as a human father is separate from a human son; He was in His Humanity like the soul is in its body; the Father and He were one (John x. 30). The Lord's Humanity is called the Son of Mary, the Son of Man, and the Son of God. Let us consider it a little under each of these heads.

And when we speak of the Lord's Humanity or of humanity

in general, we must bear in mind that human nature is not a simple element, but a wonderful organization of spiritual and natural forms. "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." The body is an amazing system of innumerable vessels arranged by infinite wisdom in matchless perfection from the skin inwards. Though undoubtedly finite, there is a sense of infinity impresses us at every step while we examine the wonders of the human frame. The bones, wonderfully varied, each to its use, are the rocky framework affording foundation and support to the whole. The circulatory system in the body far excels the most perfectly arranged apparatus in a city, or a kingdom even, for supplying water, gas, and drainage. The best arranged army of labourers constructing a magnificent palace is not worthy to be compared to the beautiful and orderly array of blood globules permeating incessantly the avenues of the human structure, and restoring vigour, beauty, and substance, wherever deficient, to the palace in which the immortal man resides. Who can tell the wonders of the brain and nervous system, that unparalleled network which conveys vitality, motion, and sensation to every fibre of the living fabric, and has done the work which we are slowly and imperfectly imitating with the electric telegraph ever since the first human body was created. We are, indeed, marvellously fashioned; the whole universe of nature has its counterpart in man; he is a world in miniature.

But if the body is a wonderful congeries of organs, still more so is the soul. Its lowest activities, which manifest themselves as bodily life, energize every part of the frame, and are the secret underlying causes of all its living appetites and transformations. No sooner is the soul gone, than corruption and disorganization take the place of all the active perfect formation we so lately beheld. The bloom of beauty fades, and withers in decay; a constant proof that the lowest things of the soul are superior to all the perfections of the body. Then we have the degree of mind which animates the senses, and by their means observes and stores up within itself the innumerable treasures of knowledge and of science. No one can number the sensations of a single sense on a single day. A whole army of sounds impresses the ear, of sights offers itself to the eye. Each sense has its world of sensations, to which it acts as the door, and in which it lives. The impressions made, no man can number, but they are stored up in their appropriate places in the thresholds of the soul, to be used by it in perfecting its views and principles. These are mental magazines, from which the spirit draws the raw materials to form the beautiful tissues of thought, idea, and fancy, in which it loves to live. Above these

are the rational powers, and those affections for higher truth which urge man on to penetrate beneath the surface of things, and see the real essences, the true and the good. Here are those sacred appetites which thirst for right, which long for the enduring; which weigh, measure, compare, and calculate, and out of seemingly chaotic masses of observations on nature and on man, educe clear and beautiful deductions, which bring us nearer to the explanations of both. Here are those affections which prefer the true to the seeming, and ensure the progress of the human race. Without this super-sensual degree of the human soul man would remain an unprogressive animal, bound to the senses and appetites like the brutes which perish. But we have a still higher degree, the spiritual, the religious, the inner man. This seeks for higher truth than that of nature. It longs for a higher world. It is the sanctuary of the soul, in which there should be lighted the golden candlestick of heaven's own light, where the shew-bread of heavenly goodness should be on the altar of a heart devoted to charity and to God; and whence the incense of praise and prayer and faith should ascend to the Lord of all. The Israelitish sanctuary was a type of this little heaven in the human soul. In its firmament are the love of God, wisdom from God, and rays of spiritual glory countless as the stars. The natural man is the natural universe in miniature, the spiritual man is the spiritual universe in miniature. And within all is the holy of holies, the divine dwelling-place with man. For God has an inner divine receptacle from which His still small voice speaks the language of mercy and of love. Out of this in the highest chamber of the soul an inner voice of blessing descends; or if man is unhappily forgetful of the path of duty, reproof and warning are given. Here the Lord meets with man to counsel and to save him. Happy are they who never close this door of mercy in themselves.

Such is a faint, brief, and imperfect outline of that wonderful being man. A sketch only of what is meant by human nature; each part might have been filled up by an incalculable number of particulars. But this must at present suffice to give us an idea of what the Lord assumed, in entering into human nature in our fallen humanity. The portion of humanity which was fallen, and in ruins, was what is called the natural man. The heaven within, like the heaven above, is beyond the reach of human defilement. We close it against ourselves when we sin, but it remains uninjured. The world within, but not the heaven, we have desecrated and disordered, and this like the world around, required subduing and reclaiming. We had no power

of our own to do it. No man could give an example, or supply the influences required. The Lord had shone into our humanity as long as there was anything in us to reflect His light with saving power. At length "the light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not."—John i. 5. "He looked, and there was none to help. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him."—Isa. lix. 16. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."—Isa. ix. 6. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began; that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us."—Luke i. 68—71.

The mighty God then assumed fallen human nature with all its forms, and the human body, from the mother. This humanity was the Son of Mary, "made of a woman, made under the law."—Gal. iv. 4. This humanity had the imperfections, and tendencies to evil, in our common nature, in Him: for "the Lord laid on Him the iniquity, of us all."—Isa. liii. 6. "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?"—Job xxv. 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."—Job. xiv. 4. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."—2 Cor. v. 21. He had to be tempted in all points like as we are (Heb. iv. 15), that He might subdue and sanctify our nature in Himself, and then give us power to sanctify ours. For their sakes He said, "I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19.

But while, from the mother, human nature was received in a fallen state, and was her son; from the Father within, there was received the embryo of a divine human nature; the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and a Holy Thing was formed in her. This Holy Formation in the human nature, and the commencement of its glorified state, was as the angel said, The Son of God. A Son because it was a production, a formation from what was prior to itself, and therefore it was not eternal, as Son, but the Son of God because God produced it, from His own holy divine nature.

We have the Lord's humanity now before us as it was at

the incarnation, partly and interiorly divine from the Father within, who had assumed it; partly human from a fallen human mother. This latter part needing to be transformed, sanctified, and glorified, so that the Son also, like the Father, might have life in Himself (John v. 26), "and wield all power in heaven and on earth."—Matt. xxviii. 19.

The consideration next requiring our attention is, what is that in the Lord which is properly meant by the Son of Man? It is not uncommon to hear the view advanced, and this has sometimes been used as an argument against the incarnation, that divine and human are opposites. They are not so; man is a likeness of his Maker. Whatever there is in man when he is in order, finitely, there is in God infinitely. God is an infinite Divine Man. God as He is in Himself, in the depths of Deity, unmanifested, is above all human thought. When He manifests Himself it is in attributes of Love, Wisdom, and Power, and these are all human. So far as man knows God, he knows Him as a Divine Man. All things in creation have a human likeness about them, both in heaven and earth so that all heaven may be likened to a single angel (Ps. xxxiv. 7), and the Church on earth to a single man (Eph. i. 23). All animals even are, more or less, perfect imitations of the human form, and plants are resemblances at a greater distance to man. How could all this be unless the manifested Creator were a Divine Man? The hidden or secret principle of Deity is the Divine Love, the manifesting principle of Deity is the Divine Truth, the Word, and it is Divinely Human; a Divine Man. The Divine Truth which descended from the Lord into the angels, and shines in heaven as holy light, is the Son of Man in heaven, and the same as filled the Humanity of the Lord. The Son of Man in Him and the Son of Man in heaven both signify the inner light of Divine Truth. The Word, or the Divine Truth, being the Son of Man, it not only existed in heaven as the Lord said (John iii. 13), but descended into His own human nature, there to be tempted, there to fight against every evil tendency, there to suffer inwardly all that His body underwent outwardly, there to purify and sanctify the human, and make it a sacred receptacle of the fulness of the Godhead. All spiritual conflict is done by Divine Truth: the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. vi. 17): love is within the truth, but in the time of temptation is not seen. The Son of Man being the Divine Truth or Word which was made flesh, or became man in the Lord (John i. 14), we may readily understand all that the Scriptures say concerning the Son of Man. When the people who heard the Lord

speak of the Son of Man having to be lifted up, said, Who is this Son of Man? He replied, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light."—John xii. 35, 36. The Son of Man and the light must mean the same thing, or the reply of the Lord would be no answer to the people. "He who soweth the good seed," the Lord said on another occasion, "is the Son of Man."—Matt. xiii. 37. All good seed comes from Divine Truth. When speaking of those who reject Him, the Lord said again, "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."—John xii. 43. And while He informs us here that the Word will judge, in another place He declares, "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."—John v. 26, 27. Judgment of course can only come from the light of Divine Truth; that only can manifest the internal nature of all, discern, discriminate, and adjudge. When the Lord spoke those mysterious words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you (Ver. 63), they were hard to be understood by those who had no relish for the spirit and life of His words. But to those who drink in their divine wisdom, and incorporate in themselves the goodness to which that wisdom leads, and by which it is accompanied, it is known that "the flesh of the Son of Man is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed."—Ver. 55.

Much is said in the Scriptures of the Son of Man being crucified and glorified. And, when we understand the Divine Truth both in the Lord and from the Lord to be meant, these declarations become most instructive. For what is so much opposed by erring and evil men, as the very Divine Truth which is seeking to save them? To represent this, the Lord who was truth embodied, was pleased to permit the Jews to illtreat Him personally, precisely as they and all who deride His Word do in their hearts when they finally reject Him. They crucify Him afresh (Heb. vi. 6). The Son of Man, the Divine Truth, however, though crucified and trampled upon, will finally triumph. He will be glorified. The Son of Man was glorified in the Lord's person again and again, until everything in the humanity which was not in agreement with Divine Truth was rejected, and Divine Love and Wisdom possessed His entire

nature. This was meant by the remarkable words, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."—John xiii. 31, 32.

When Divine Truth descended into the unglorified Humanity of the Lord, it would find almost everything in disagreement with itself. It would be a stranger, just as the Lord was, among His own people. "That was the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."—John i. 9—11. In the temptations the Lord endured, the truth in Him would be contemned, despised, rejected, crucified, in every way illtreated; but inasmuch as He always conquered after He had allowed the evil fully to manifest themselves, so the Son of Man was always finally glorified. This took place first with one principle in Him, and then with another, and then another, to the end of His abode in the world, and therefore it is said, "The Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him." And again, "God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." Divine Truth was glorified when the evils and false principles from which struggles came were cast out; then the divine was manifestly united with it, and it ruled the whole mind. We would especially call attention to the divine words, "God shall also glorify Him in Himself," which shew that there only seemed to be separation between the Father and the Son while the Son was unglorified. When the work of glorification was completed, He was so united as that they made only one consciousness. God glorified Him in Himself.

There is another remarkable passage in relation to the Lord's glorification, which has presented difficulty to many who wished to see clearly that the Lord and the Father are one as He said. It has been supposed to involve insuperable objections to the doctrine of the New Church, but, in reality, those doctrines alone can explain it. It occurs in the Lord's prayer to the Father. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."—John xvii. 5. And, on this passage it has been said, and with some appearance of truth, if the Lord and the Father were one person, why should He pray to the Father? Did He pray to Himself? We will presently offer what appears to us a complete solution of the difficulty. But, in the meantime, allow me to point out that the difficulty is equally great, and to us it seems much greater, on either of the other two modes of think-

ing, which could be offered by Christians who think differently from us.

Let us suppose this passage to be brought forward by one who considers the Father and the Son to be two separate and distinct divine persons, one equal to the other, and each all-powerful. May we not ask, how it happens that an all-powerful person should pray to another to do anything for Him? Why could He not do what He wanted for, and of Himself? If it be said, it was His suffering Humanity that prayed; we answer, that throws us upon the New Church explanation. For is it not more likely that the Father would be His own Divinity to which He prayed, rather than that He should have another Divine Person of His own, but take no notice of that, but pass by it, and pray to another and distant Divine Person, for what His own Divinity could equally have given? To us, the supposition of two divine persons does not lessen, but greatly increase the difficulty. Let us observe, that the passage implies a separation between the two, which is to cease; they are to become One. "Glorify thou me," it is said, "with *thine own self*, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." But according to those who believe in two divine persons, they would remain two separate selves after the Lord's glorification equally as before. The Lord might have a glory co-equal with the Father, but it would not be the glory of the Father's own self. As we have said, then nothing is gained in the explanation of this passage, by the doctrine of two or three divine persons, but an additional obscurity.

But what shall we say, when this passage is urged by those who consider the Lord only a man, like other men, and praying to the Divine Majesty for help, as other human beings do? Are we not fairly entitled to ask, what can be meant by a mere finite human being asking to be glorified with the Father's own self? What can be meant, by a person born only between thirty and forty years before, having had glory with the Father before the world was? It would be a strange audacity, for a mere mortal to ask to be incorporated with the Almighty's own self. And certain, a worm of yesterday, could not have had glory with the Father before the world was. Neither the explanation offered by those, who teach there are three divine persons then, nor that of those who deny the proper Deity of our blessed Lord, will give a clear idea of the passage; let us inquire what light the doctrine of the New Jerusalem can throw upon it?

We have shewn that the Son of man signifies the Divine Truth. This was in the Lord as the Divine Wisdom before the

world was. "It was the Word, that was with God," not as another person, but as His own Wisdom, His Divine Understanding, His Infinite Reason, and was God (John i. 1). This had descended into the Humanity apparently alone, just as with us in our regeneration, we receive truth first, and love afterwards. From truth we advance, from truth we labour, and from truth we contend against our spiritual enemies and conquer; and then we look up and pray for love, with its blessings to descend, and it is so. Those beautiful words are fulfilled—

" Let ardent zeal our bosoms warm,
To make each other blest;
And love and truth combined, shall form
Their heaven within the breast."

In temptation, too, we should bear in mind our consciousness is always double. It is as if two persons were within us; one affected by the temptation and the pain, the other consisting of our higher, holier feelings, seemingly above us, and at a distance. This double consciousness is strikingly brought out in the address of David to the lower consciousness of his soul, as if it were another person, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."—Ps. xlii. 11.

The Lord was our leader in the Regeneration. He glorified His own Humanity as He regenerates us. The chief difference is, that He sanctified Himself; He laid down His life and took it again by His own power (John x. 18). We can only do it by power from Him. He fought against and conquered all the powers of darkness in redeeming us (Isa. lxiii. 3). But we, by His mercy, have only so much to struggle with as we can bear. The steps, however, and the experiences are alike. Hence, from what occurs in our own spiritual labours, we may have some clear idea of the states through which our Redeemer passed. The apparent separation between the Father and the Son, and the Son addressing the Father, did not prove they were distinct persons, any more than David's address to his soul, and the apparent separation between them proved that they were two distinct persons. Whatever separation there was, also we must not forget was to be put an end to, when the Lord was in His glorified state, and was so in every act of glorification. For after every temptation, He was so far glorified as to reject the evil from which He had been tempted, and bring down Divine Goodness instead, and so His Humanity was perfected through suffering (Heb. v. 9). Hence, after such states, He spoke as one with the Father, and

the possessor of all the Father had : " All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you."—John xvi. 15. Again : " All mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them."—xvii. 10. As the Humanity was glorified, it received power over all things, to give eternal life to every soul which permitted the Divine Love, or the Father, to influence them to receive it. How clearly this is stated in the opening words of this prayer : " Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee : as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him." The Son received power from the Father, to give it to man. Not, however, from the Father, out of, but from the Father in Him. " I in them," He says, " and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."—Ver. 23.

We finish this part of the argument, with the intreaty to our readers, never to forget that the Lord the Redeemer was the Father, as well as the Son, and then we shall always have the means of keeping a defined view of one glorious Divine Being before us. The prophets taught this, the Lord Himself taught it. Isaiah proclaimed of Him, whom He described as the Son, " He is the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." Again : " Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting."—Isa. lxiii. 16. To Philip, who said, " Shew us the Father?" The Saviour answered, " Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself : but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me."—John xiv. 9—11.

We should always remember, that there never was a personal separation between the Father and the Son ; " I am not alone," Jesus said, " because the Father is with Me."—John xvi. 32. And any appearance of separation was only temporary, like the appearance of two minds in man in some states of his religious experience, and as this with us is over when we have finished our course, and our whole mind is formed to the harmony of heaven, so in the case of the Lord, when His divine works of redemption and glorification were completed, He was for ever the First and the Last in one glorious Divine Person : " Lord of lords, and King of kings."—Rev. xvii. 14. " The third day I shall be perfected."—Luke xiii. 32. In the Divine Humanity

thenceforward "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." —Col. ii. 9. But, such being the case, now arises a question in connexion with our text. In the vision of the prophet, there manifestly appeared a distance between the Ancient of days, and the Son of man. "He came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him."

In the scenes beheld in vision by the prophets, in which the Divine Being is introduced, it is necessary to remark, that it is not the Lord's own Divine Person who is seen, but only a representation of Him, in the world of spirits. He dwells in the sun of heaven, in light inaccessible, which no man can approach unto (1 Tim. vi. 16). When the Lord is described as seen by John, as a Lamb, as a Lion, as standing among candlesticks, we are surely not to suppose that the sacred presence of the Lord was actually under those shapes, but only that such representations of the Lord were seen as to correspond to some great lesson intended to be taught respecting the future states of the Church. When He was beheld as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it was to teach us that the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity had been denied from the foundation of the church. When a representation of Him was seen in the midst of the golden candlesticks, it was an intimation that the Lord is the centre of all light to the churches which illuminate an otherwise benighted world. In the same manner, to the spiritual eyes of the prophet Daniel, was exhibited this wonderful vision; first, of the Lord divided into two, distant from each other, and then as brought together forming One. This was to teach that the church would worship a divided God, but at last they would be brought to see that the Ancient of days and the Son of man were One, and then He would have a dominion which would not pass away, and a kingdom which would not be destroyed.

The whole of the remarkable figures which passed before the prophet's wondering gaze, were typical in their spiritual sense of the states through which the Christian Church would pass. We say the Christian Church, for we are not speaking of any political sense, which its letter might be supposed to bear, but of the spiritual sense, which has relation only to the Church as the Lord's spiritual kingdom. Its first state is described as a lion with eagle's wings, mentioned in the fourth verse of this chapter. And this extraordinary representation truly describes Christians as they were in their first, best days of devoted faith and love. They were as lions, bold for the truth. They went forth to reprove sin, superstition, and idolatry, wherever they found it. They spoke of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,

before kings and cottagers alike. They cared little for the advantages of earth, they sought a better country. They had eagles' wings, because the loftier soaring truths of religion are described by these singular correspondences. "They that walk upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. xl. 31. After a season of sublime meditation and lofty thought, their attention to the practical duties of life, and their exercise of every manly virtue, is pictured by the lion standing on its feet, and a man's heart being given to it. Then were Christians men indeed. They won from their persecutors admiration and esteem. They went forth, according to the equally-striking description of John, where another phase of their character is described by a white horse, Rev. vi., "conquering, and to conquer."

But, alas! the pristine state of virtue and intelligence was too short lived. When the force of their religion became felt, and their influence sought for political purposes, they were seduced by the bribes of power and wealth. Their leaders became great dignitaries, and worldliness of conduct, and looseness of life, took the place of the angel-like excellence of former days. This is meant by the next figure which Daniel saw, like to a bear. This animal is a mass of gluttonous appetites, and well represents the unelevated condition of the natural man.

After this, a third beast arose, a leopard, a spotted and ferocious animal. This beast is indicative of a perverted faith; a system of religion made up of truth, mingled with falsehood, with a spirit as destructive as the savage malignity of the leopard. The superstition of the middle ages was truth and error, the black spots thus mingled together. They held the doctrine of the Trinity, but the black spot of persons introduced gave rise to a huge idolatry. They held the necessity for good works, but the black spot of merit was introduced, and turned the good into evil; they held that the Scriptures should be read, but the black spot of, only by the clergy, made that an instrument of slavery, which was intended to give spiritual freedom. They held the certainty of the resurrection, but the black spot of flesh carnalized and darkened that doctrine, and robbed it of its glory. The doctrine of the world of spirits, that blessed arrangement of Divine mercy by which mistaken, but sincerely good persons of every persuasion, may be brought harmoniously into one fold, by the truth which they had missed here being given to them, was changed into purgatory. Indeed, every true doctrine was so perverted by dark mixtures of baleful error, that it became truly

leopard's skin, instead of the white garment of Divine truth, and the spirit of persecution waged in the name of the Prince of Peace, cruelly depriving of life, and every blessing, those whose only crime was obeying the dictates of their own consciences, shewed how truly the spirit of a savage beast pervaded the church. Though there was some beauty still left in it, the beauty was that of a leopard.

The wings of a fowl represent the appearances of elevated thought by which such a superstitious religion imposes on mankind, seeming to soar to heaven, while its real objects are altogether earthly. The four heads represent the apparent agreement produced by false reasoning of this fallen state of religion, with the sacred teaching of wisdom, intelligence, reason and science, the four great heads of instruction among mankind.

Lastly, there appeared a dreadful beast, terrible and strong exceedingly, with great iron teeth, stamping the residue of all that was valuable under its feet, and having ten horns.

This beast was the symbol of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, into which the Church would sink at last. This doctrine really makes all virtue unnecessary for heaven; all morality a work of supererogation, and by some of its maintainers it is declared that good works, if done from religious motives, destroy rather than save. It had great power, signified by the ten horns, but it was the power obtained by pandering to evil passions. This doctrine, more than any other, brings a Church to its end. The best powers of religion to elevate man are rejected by him who adopts this destructive error. It plucks the three grand doctrines of religion, love, faith, and works, up by the roots, for what it calls faith is no faith, not being a faith in what the Lord taught. It is plausible, speaks much of the nothingness of man, and the greatness and sovereignty of God, but it denies that sovereignty where it ought really to be acknowledged—in keeping God's commandments,—and sets its own false reasonings, instead of loving and true obedience. Hence come frauds under the appearance of sanctity, a sensual hardness against truth, streams of immorality destructive of marriage, and all the real virtues of life, combined with a ready means of making all right for heaven, however filthy, deformed, and impure of soul, if only this dogma be adopted. Oh! no one can tell what fearful consequences have flowed from this doctrine. It devours the earth (the Church), treads it down and breaks it in pieces. The utter end of the Church, meant in the Scriptures by the end of the world, is thus produced.

Then judgment was performed. The Ancient of Days did

sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hairs of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set and the books were opened.

In the world of spirits judgment always takes place when one Church has come to its end and another is about to begin. The judgment, we must always remember, is in that world which we enter after death. It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment. The scenes on such occasions are such as here described. An innumerable company of angels, the presence of the Lord powerfully amongst them, the divine influx like a stream of fire affecting all minds, laying all secret states open, and bringing out the real dispositions of the vast multitudes there assembled. The books are opened. All are adjudged to their places, and thus the spiritual atmosphere is cleared. The persuasions of the old dispensation may continue on earth, for a season and a time, but without dominion over others. A new dispensation begins. And, as we see in our text, it begins by bringing the Father and the Son of Man together. It has already been shewn that they were never really separate. The Lord Jesus was from His advent ever the Father and the Son; the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. xii. 2); our All in all (Col. iii. 11). Yet for centuries in the minds of professing Christians there had not been this united view of the Lord. The Father had been regarded as the Infinite Supreme, high above all, and of terrible attributes, inducing awe and dread. The Son was believed to be an advocate with the Father, to plead our cause, but not as being Himself the hearer and granter of prayer. There was an immense distance between them, until at last a great body of professing Christians believed that the distance was all that between Infinite and finite, God and man, for the Saviour was only human. The prayers of Christendom had not been directed to Him as having all power in heaven and on earth, but to the Father, with the addition totally un-sanctioned in Scripture, for His sake. He was almost invariably placed at the end, not at the beginning of a prayer.

But, blessed be the Divine Mercy, men were to know better. They would bring the Son of Man to the Ancient of Days. They would regard them both as one Divine Person adoring the Father in the Son. The New Church would be the bride; the Lamb's wife. She would know and acknowledge Him to be her Maker, her Saviour, and King. God over all; blessed for ever.

SERMON XXVI.

KNOWING THE FATHER AND THE SON.

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."—Matt. xi. 27.

WHAT think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? were questions put by our Lord Himself to the Pharisees; and they are questions which should be put incessantly to ourselves, and to all Christians until they have obtained clear answers, founded upon the Scriptures and on full conviction. Let no one suppose that the Divine Word suggests questions to which it affords no answers. The chief, nay, the only, difficulties which exist to prevent earnest lovers of truth obtaining satisfactory replies, arise from their taking for granted what they have been taught previously to their consulting the Scriptures for themselves. These previous views remain like dark shades upon the mind; and seen through them the Scripture teaching seems to be confused and mysterious, and at length they give up the enquiry as one altogether in vain. They have asked and received not, because they have asked amiss. They have asked and expected to be confirmed in their former ideas, and so have obtained no answer. Let them ask, with the child-like desire to be taught from the very first idea, to know the God they wish to love, and persevere in the enquiry, and they will find the time promised by the Lord Himself has come, when He will shew them plainly of the Father.

The doctrine of the New Church is, that the Humanity which God our heavenly Father assumed to save the human race is the Son. This Humanity was inwardly divine from the Father, outwardly clothed, as to mind and body, with what belongs to infirm humanity from the mother, until by sufferings during His life and death, He was made completely perfect—fully glorified. In proportion as this glorification of the Humanity was effected, all things of divine government, and all power in heaven and on

earth, were committed unto Him by the Father within Him. The Father then ruled the universe by Him, not as a passive organism, but as a conscious Divine Man. The government was on His shoulder, and of His dominion and peace there should be no end.

The passage before us speaks of this glorified Divine Humanity: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." The divine qualities, the divine excellencies, the divine powers, are not from any separate divinity which I possess, they are all from the invisible Father within, just as the lower powers of mind and body which a man possesses, are all from the energies of his ruling love. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." The Divine Humanity is infinite in excellence. It is the only begotten. No man nor angel is like it. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." This infinitely excellent Humanity can alone comprehend the ardour of the infinite love, the Father. Only in the Son and by the Son can the tenderness of our God and Saviour be made known. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." We should never lose sight of this great truth: the Son alone can comprehend and can reveal the Father.

The views which are commonly entertained respecting the Father and the Son are entirely inconsistent with the passage before us, as they are indeed with the whole Word of God. They teach that the Father and the Son are two distinct divine persons; the Son eternal as the Father, and co-equal with Him in majesty, power, and glory. But we are informed in the text that the Son has received all things from the Father. If they are two separate divine persons, the Son could have had nothing, neither power, majesty, nor glory, before He received them from the Father; for it is said, "All things were delivered to Him of the Father." And how can we conceive of an eternal divine person who had nothing? Again, if the Father were separate from the Son, after He had delivered all things to the Son, He would Himself have had nothing. And once more we may ask, How can we conceive of a divine person who has nothing? Again, this idea assumes that the Father can be known separately from the Son; that He was so known by the Jews, and He is known now to be such a being as they conceived Him to be, awful, rigid, and swift to punish. The idea of all those who conceive of the Father as a distinct person from our Lord, is now just the same as the Jews had of Him. To them He was infinitely great, and infinitely severe, and so He is still. Yet our Lord says, "They did not know the Father." Their ideas

of Him were not true knowledge of Him. Nor could He be known except in and through the Son. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Let then all those who have a Jewish idea of the Father of heaven and earth, or who suppose they know Him out of the Son, bear this teaching of the great Saviour in mind,—they know not the Father.

Others there are who equally depart from the teaching of the divine words before us, in assuming that the Lord Jesus was separate from the Father, and was only a human being, great by goodness, talent, and mission, but still only a mere man. They conceive they know the Son, and that He was a finite human being—a mere mortal. Yet how palpably these views are contradicted by our text is evident: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Surely something more than human is implied in this. The expression in the original, too, is stronger than "no man," it is "no one" (*oudeis*); thus no man nor angel is implied, no one but the Father knows the Son. Surely then, there must be in Him something greater than man, greater than angel; something which proceeded forth and came from God, the only-begotten of the Father; the very form and image of the divine substance (Heb. i. 2), and thus having a dignity, and excellency, a fulness in Him which none but the Father alone could adequately comprehend. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father."

We thus learn from our text, at the outset, that no one knows the Father but he who has learned the Father in the Son; and, secondly, no one knows the Son who looks at Him simply from the outside. He could only be accurately judged of from within. He has a name written which no man knoweth but He Himself. Its outward expression, however, is "King of kings and Lord of lords."—Rev. xix. 12, 16.

Before, however, advancing in the consideration of the text, allow me to notice the varied descriptions our Lord gives of Himself. Here, it is written, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Shortly after we find Him saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—Luke xii. 50. Here, in the first case, He is represented as having possession of all things; in the second, as straitened, and desiring further purification. Once more, we read, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand."—John iii. 34, 35. But again, He says, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for

what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."—John v. 19. "I can of mine own self do nothing."—Ver. 30. In the 17th of John again, it is written, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God."—Ver. 3. And yet, in the awful scene at Gethsemane, He utters the words, full of resignation and grief, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."—Matt. xxvi. 39. Here He appears weak and bowed down. But when His sufferings were over, and He was fully glorified, He announced His last charge to His disciples before He left in those solemn and sublime words—"All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age."*

These differences of the Lord's utterances to some are sources of great perplexity, to some also they are causes of dispute. One class of readers will occasionally hold to the one class of passages, and entirely pass by the other. Another class will take the opposite passages, and close their eyes to anything which implies suffering or inferiority on the part of the Lord. Only, however, by taking both do we obtain the whole counsel of God. And from both it is evident that the Lord, in glorifying His human nature, went through precisely similar states to those the regenerate man has passed through, in spiritualizing his. As man is sometimes exalted to states of joy and peace, and then feels entirely heavenly, so that nothing seems wanting to him only that paradise should be opened to him; but, at other times, when he is tempted sorely, he feels quite devoid of good: light has departed, and he mourns like the apostle—"When I would do good, evil is present with me." The Psalms are filled with these alternations of trial and triumph, because they are the divinely appointed descriptions of the struggles of the regenerate life. The consciousness is, where the excitement is. In temptation, the excitement is, where the tempting evil is. In triumph the excitement is, where the conquering good is. We speak from our consciousness, and thus seem all good at one time, all deficient at another.

This double consciousness, or rather variety of consciousness, may be illustrated by the variety of language which occurs in the Psalms. And this illustration is the more to be adopted because these divine compositions are intended to describe the

various states and feelings which occur in the course of man's regeneration. And when we remember that David, the royal psalmist, was also the type of the Lord the Redeemer, as is universally admitted in the Christian Church, we shall see that the words which apply to the spiritually-minded Christian, and describe his varying states, also, in their highest, inmost sense, describe the states and sufferings of the Redeemer.

In one Psalm, the 21st for instance, we have the language of confidence, gratitude, and delight. "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the requests of his lips. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head." But in the very next Psalm how very different is the description. "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head." These sayings are widely different in their character, but they are precise portraits of the states of the soul under different circumstances, and as we feel, so we speak. These varieties of feeling have led to serious mistakes among those who have not well understood the nature of the soul and its regeneration. The joys the Lord has in mercy given them, very early after their repentance, they have supposed were complete salvation. And hence they have presumed they were completely fitted for heaven, and preached up instantaneous salvation when they yet knew very little of themselves, and had made very slight progress indeed. They were only just over the Red Sea, and they imagined they were already close to Canaan. They have only got a sunny day in early spring, and they suppose they have got all the glories of the summer. The next day may be chill and cold, and they may be as much depressed as before they were exalted; but we should all remember that both these changes are necessary to produce the grand result,—the purification of the soul from self and sin, and its formation to be happy to all eternity.

How deep a state of agonizing trial is described in Psalm cii. "My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert." Yet in the very next Psalm comes the most glorious language of highest exultation: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth

all thy diseases : who redeemeth thy life from destruction : who crowneth thee with loving-kindnesses and tender mercies." Such and so various are different sensations of which the regenerating man is conscious, and the Lord Jesus, as to His Humanity, went through all these. "He was tempted in all points like as we are."—Heb. iv. 15.

The distinction between the Humanity of the Lord and the state of man, was, that man has in him, by birth, the germs of an angelic nature, through which he derives help from his heavenly Father and deliverer, to restore his fallen manhood from the ruins of the fall. Man is tempted by evil spirits, but only by such portion as he is able to bear. And each time he triumphs he feels a happiness faintly approaching to angelic; enough, however, to discover to him that "the kingdom of God is within him."

The Lord's Humanity, however, had in it the germs of a divine nature. He was tempted by all hell, through the infirmities of the humanity from the mother, and overcame by the power of His own Godhead within. And, when He overcame, after each temptation, it was not an angelic state that was opened in Him, but a divine one. All things, as stated in our text, were delivered into His hand. All power was given unto Him in heaven and on earth.

He assumed and glorified our nature, that it might be the head of all things to us, a new and living way to the blessings of divine peace: the vine, of which we might become the branches. How strikingly He states this in His own words. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19.

In doing this divine work of His own sanctification, the Lord's consciousness varied, as ours also varies in the process of our sanctification, and thus we have a complete explanation of those varied accounts of the Son which the gospels afford. The Son is the Lord's Humanity, so far as unglorified, straitened, and able to do nothing; so far as glorified, perfect, and able to do all things. Thus may we see why it is said of the Son as to His divine nature at the incarnation, "Let all the angels worship Him" (Heb. i. 6), and in His state of full glorification, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."—Ver. 8, 9. The Divine Humanity is God from God; the visible God in whom is the invisible.

Thus, knowing the Son, we may through Him know the Father. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

The rendering of the latter part of our text is not a happy one. It ought to be, Neither knoweth any one the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal.

The passage in the original not only declares that the Father cannot be truly known except by means of the Son, but also asserts that he can only be known to those to whom the Son willeth to reveal. Thus asserting that there are some to whom the Son wills to reveal, and some to whom He does not will. The Lord often made a similar distinction. Some He invited to Him, some He repelled. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."—John iii. 21. These He invited. But, on the contrary, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."—Ver. 20. These He repelled. When any one has a disposition to do the truth, he has a genuine love of the truth, and this genuine love of the truth is the turning point between a saved and a condemned state. He who is in a love for the truth will never be condemned. He who is not in a love for the truth cannot be saved. The apostle asserts this very strongly in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. ii.: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not *the love of the truth*, that they might be saved."—Ver. 10. Again, "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—Ver. 12. The love of truth places man on the heavenly side: the love of unrighteousness, and thence of the falsehood which excuses it, keeps man on the infernal side. The *love of truth* is that charity which, according to the apostle, "rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. xiii. 6), and of which he further says, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." To men of genuine love, therefore, the Son willeth to reveal the Father, and to none others, in fact, is it possible. "If any man love God," the apostle Paul says, "the same is known of Him." To him the Son wills to reveal, and He being in a state of love Himself, can understand the revelation. Hence, the apostle John said, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."—1 John iv. 7, 8.

We sometimes imagine that the reason for the slow progress

of truth is to be found in the feeble means there are for its propagation; or, in the circumstances in which persons live, and which are unfavourable to their reception of truth; but far beyond the power of these influences is the feeble advance of truth owing to the feebleness of the love of truth for the truth's sake. The love of wealth, the love of power, the love of pleasure, these are the potent influences of men now, but the love of truth is only influential with a few. But few though they may be, these are they to whom the Son wills to reveal the Father. To these He addresses the sacred words, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

But what is the revelation of the Father? It is the unfolding of the Eternal Love. GOD IS LOVE. This is the all-originating source of all the divine operations: the CENTRE from which all the other attributes of God flow, as rays from the sun. His truth is the light of love. His omnipotence is the power of love. His justice is love's persevering demand for right, as the only means of happiness. From love, creation and every divine act has proceeded. This principle is then rightly called The Father. But the real character of the divine love could not be known before God was manifest in the flesh. Men had communications in old time by prophets, by angels and spirits, but no man had heard the voice of the Father at any time, or seen His shape.—John v. 37. The appearances, which were called by the ancients, "Seeing God," took place by angels being for the time filled with His spirit, and speaking from Him (Acts vii. 30, 38; Heb. ii. 2). In very deed no man had seen God at any time, until the only-begotten Son brought Him to view (John i. 18).

His unutterable purity was such that it was humbling Himself to behold the things that were in heaven. But the world was lying in wickedness. All the means previously had failed. Mankind, in every age, had become worse, and the measure of iniquity was now full. It was the fulness of time. Men were worshipping deified lusts and passions, or deriding all worship. Ancient faith had died out. And if any appearance of respect for holy things remained, it was largely contaminated with hypocrisy. It was night. Darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. The world lay in sensuality, but with awful fears and dreadful sorrows, expecting to hear the thunder of doom; when, lo! it was announced that love to redeem was disclosed from the Father, not vengeance to destroy. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The angelic proclamation was made, "For unto

you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And the heavenly host broke out in adoring praise, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." In this way the Son first made known the Father. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."—2 Cor. v. 19. "In His love and in His pity He redeemed them."—Isa. lxiii. 9.

And what a revelation of divine love was this! No vindictive justice for man's many transgressions; no revenge for man's many insults; no punishment for centuries of rebellion; no triumph over man's multiplied miseries; for hell triumphed over the human race, and hoped for lasting sovereignty; but no, divine love forbade it, and the Son was born who alone could make mankind to know the Father. In the very act of incarnation the Eternal became known as a Saviour, a Helper, not a fearful Judge: the fulfilment of those divine words was complete, "I, even I, am He who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."—Isa. xliii. 25.

To illustrate this, let us suppose a great king, whose subjects in a distant part of his empire had never seen him, though they had received from him the best laws, and many messengers. They had, however, broken his laws, defied his authority, beaten and slain his messengers, and madly joined themselves to his enemies and their's. Let us suppose these enemies finding they were freely admitted into the territories which ought to have been guarded against them, had turned upon their foolish allies, and begun to plunder their cities, to confine some in dungeons, to harass, illtreat, and murder others; when all seemed to portend utter ruin and massacre, and groans, and sighs, and mourning were heard everywhere. But, when the misery is at its depth, an unknown champion is ushered in. He defends the helpless, sets free the captives, defeats and drives off the ruthless foe, and proclaims liberty and peace over the land. And if this redeemer, when the grateful people came to thank and bless him, was made known to them as their good king whose laws they had previously broken, but who, moved by his love, had come to deliver them at once from their misery, and from the guilt which had led to it; would not this be the revelation at once of their father and their king? Thus was our Father made known to us by the Son. Hence the delivered Church is represented as saying to the Redeemer, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting."—Isa. lxiii. 16.

Yet so prone are we to error, and so little have many learned of the Father, in consequence of not looking for the Father in the Son, that they imagine it was the Father's wrath against man which brought the Redeemer down. They have been misled by the unscriptural fiction, invented in the dark ages, that God was angry with man for taking the forbidden fruit, and doomed both the taker and the whole human race to perdition, unless another divine person, which they suppose to be the Saviour, would come and die in man's stead. Thus reversing all true knowledge of God and of redemption. They talk of reconciling God, the Scriptures speaking of reconciling man. They say much of the Lamb of God who was slain to pacify His Father. The Scriptures proclaim the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The Scriptures speak of the works of the devil being destroyed (1 John iii. 8); of ransoming man from the power of the grave, and of redeeming him from death (Hosea xiii. 14).

It was a sad reverse of the truth that was arrived at, when men, fancying they could know the Father out of the Son, attributed to Him the anger and the revenge of their own fallen nature, instead of the love and tenderness of the Son, brought to view in the redemption of the world. But it was not anger, it was love, brought the Saviour into the world,—the Father's love. The will of the Father was unutterable love to save mankind. "I came down from heaven," the Lord said, "not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life."—John vi. 38, 40. The love of the Father was far beyond what the Humanity had yet attained, it was infinite; and that will was to be done, not the will of the partially glorified Humanity. But if the Father had willed punishment, how could the world have been saved? The idea is as absurd as it is unscriptural. It represents one of the divine persons demanding to have a sacrifice, for his justice, and the other two requiring no sacrifice, but one of them giving it. And yet they are all represented as being alike in will, mind, power, and glory. Such is the result of seeking to know the Father out of the Son. No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him. But what a miracle of love did the Son reveal in the Father! It was not love only to the obedient, but to the rebellious, the worthless, the vile. The apostle puts it well, when he said to the Romans, "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 toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Rom. v. 7, 8. Yes, it was love to us; when we were sunk in unworthiness and sin, a love to save and bless us, which brought God in Christ to our help, "to reconcile the world unto Himself."—2 Cor. v. 19. It was not a sacrifice to vengeance he made, but to His own love. And not His death only was such a sacrifice, but His life. For the Lord of Life to demean Himself to become a servant, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; to walk, to fight through our valley, covered with its thickest gloom, to endure a life-long of all the assaults of hell; this was sorrow, this was sacrifice. But our Father's love demanded it, and He gave it. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He put Him to grief: not, however, to please vengeance, but to satisfy His love; and not that another should be bruised, but that His own Humanity assumed to save mankind, should through sufferings be glorified. And glorified and united fully to the Father; when, as the prophet says, His soul was made an offering for sin; He would see His seed in all the redeemed, He shall prolong His days, His reign should endure for ever, and the pleasure of the Lord in the salvation of His immortal children shall prosper in His hand (Isa. liii. 10).

The second portion of the knowledge of the Father which is revealed by the Son is, that He is a God of order. He would save mankind by an orderly method.

It has sometimes occurred to the natural man that it would have better become the dignity of the Supreme Ruler of the world, to have saved the world by an immediate exertion of omnipotence. Why not at once have put down the powers of hell, without the slow process of the incarnation, life, and death of the Redeemer? The prophet no doubt alludes to this feeling when he says, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" But such a fiat would only have revealed power, not our heavenly Father's wisdom, nor His bearing, suffering love. Immense power would have been seen, and would have been regarded by the naturally-minded as swayed by anger, by vengeance, by motives such as sway himself. This would not have revealed our Father, nor would it have had the effect of redeeming man from his sins.

To redeem mankind by a power which should put down the hells, and not destroy even them; to present a perfect example of obedience, wisdom, and worth, a victorious resistance of every temptation, every sin; to exhibit unutterable love, love in suffering, love unto death; to form a Divine Mediator through whom the Holy Spirit of blessing, light, and power might flow;

to do all this by exact obedience to those very laws which man had fallen by breaking; thus to magnify the law and make it honourable. All this was accomplished by the assumption of humanity according to the divine laws of order. For these ends God became a man; for these the prophet was inspired to say, "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. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."—Isa. xl. 10, 11. "And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Every circumstance of the Saviour's life was a revelation of the Father. I speak not now of the power requisite to deliver men from the cruelty of evil spirits, and enable Him to say, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Luke x. 18, 19. Though this of itself reveals the mighty God, the everlasting Father; but I speak of the different circumstances of His life as recorded in the Gospels. He restored the sick at His word, and thus revealed the Divine Physician from whom all healing comes. He raised the dead, and thus revealed the Lord and Giver of Life. He fed the multitudes with new-created bread, and thus revealed the presence of the Creator. He pardoned the sinful and the sorrowing, and thus revealed the tender forgiveness of the Father of Mercy. No penitent was rejected: when they acknowledged they had nothing to pay—and what can sinners pay their God?—He frankly forgave uttering the divine law. Those whose sins are many are forgiven when they love much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

In circumstances of the greatest trial, He never failed to appear and deliver His disciples, because in this He revealed our Father's care and mercy. What an awful night that was on the Sea of Galilee, when the disciples well-nigh suffered shipwreck. The heavy clouds had gathered over the dark deep waters; the winds howled fearfully over the foaming waves; the whistle of the tempest became more and more piercing, as the ship bounded over wave and furrow of the deep, but hour after hour becoming less manageable by the struggling crew. The yawning abysses threatened to engulf them, or the mountains of water to roll over them; human skill, wisdom, and power were all in vain. Nothing was left them but the appeal to their wonder-working

master. They awoke Him ; for He will be enquired of, and appealed to ; then safety came. With divine dignity He uttered the sacred words, "Peace, be still," and there was a calm. Well might even the sailors exclaim, "What manner of man is this? for even the winds and the seas obey Him!"

How clearly is the Calmer of the storms of life's wide sea here revealed. The affairs of life are like a sea, and often not a sunny one. We launch our bark in life's early day, and skim brightly, smoothly onwards. Our vessel, if rightly built, goes gaily forwards, and everything promises fair for reaching the destined haven. But now a storm comes on ; clouds gather darkly o'er our path. Misfortunes, afflictions, heavy trials come ; storms of fears, of delusions, of anxieties, of yawning cares come on ; billow after billow rolls at and over us ; we are well nigh in despair. But we look to the Lord in our distresses, He rises for our help. "Peace, be still," again falls from His divine lips. He makes the storm a calm, and brings us to the desired haven. We recognize our Father and Saviour, and exclaim with the Psalmist, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

But the sublimest revelations of the Father in the Son were made at Gethsemane and on the cross.

He triumphs most who unflinchingly endures most, when love demands the sacrifice. This grand lesson of suffering to save was afforded in the horrors of that dark garden among the olive trees. The Gospel narrative of the dread sorrows of that fearful scene is brief, but written in dreadful lines : "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The garden in which He was, the cup of which he speaks that was so fearful He wished it to pass away, the gloom of night, all indicate the character of the temptation. It was the effort of all the legions of darkness to induce Him to spare Himself ; to leave the work of redemption unfinished, and the human race to their fate. All the false persuasions that the legions of darkness could press upon Him were perseveringly applied ; the Circean cup of pleasure, not purity, was pressed upon Him with infernal cunning and malice ; He endured this in the garden, which was indicative of truths derived from love. On His single person hung the safety of the universe. In the Psalms the inner character of the final temptations of the Lord are more fully revealed : He is represented as saying, "Many bulls have compassed me : strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My

heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me to the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me." While thus beset with crowds of infernals, whose might and malice are thus indicated, the ingratitude of mankind would be with Satanic malice pressed upon Him. The weakness of His disciples, soon to be shewn in their desertion of their Benefactor, one of them at that moment plotting with His enemies to betray Him with a kiss. All this bearing on the Humanity not fully glorified, might well cause the agonizing sweat, and the prayer that it might pass away. But the Father, the Infinite Love which was within, would bate not a tear, not a groan: all was to be endured that hell could inflict, and was endured, and by enduring was triumphed over. An eternal lesson was given to His creatures, of patience, of meekness, of suffering love; the horrors of that night passed away by the reception of strength to endure the still deeper sorrow of the cross, to end in the final glory of the resurrection. Thus was the Son made perfect, and thus was the Father revealed.

Just as the character of a human soul, and especially of its ruling love, as revealed by the acts its body performs, so the character of the Father within Him was revealed by the acts the Son performed. And as the body is trained and habituated to what the ruling love constantly enforces, until it becomes, as it were, the embodiment of that love in every feature, so, but in a still higher degree, the Son became the very embodiment of the Father, so that He could say, "All things that the Father hath are mine."—John xvi. 15. "All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."—John xvii. 10. The Father shining through the Saviour is plainly revealed, as tenderness unutterable, as love immeasurable and unspeakable, but ever acting by His divine laws. As doing everything which laws of mercy and order will permit to the penitent, but from very love, divine goodness never outraging them, never suspending them.

To this glorious Divine Man, then, we are invited, to find our real Father. We can find Him nowhere else. "No man," He said, "cometh unto the Father but by me." How affectingly, after the teaching of our text, does He say, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, what a welcome lesson this should be to us. Who has not heart-sorrows, bitter griefs, deep troubles, which have kept the spirit toiling for relief, looking on every hand for succour? Here, in the glorified Saviour, it is to be found. It is not human

help, but divine. It is rest promised by Him who is able to give it. "I will give you rest." How can we hesitate to accept the assurance? The Divine Man, who has perfected His own Humanity, offers power to regenerate ours. O let us confide in Him. He is our Father, our Saviour, our Regenerator, all in One. Have we been in doubt if we shall be saved; if we shall be accepted by the everlasting Father? Here is He who has revealed Him, and it is Him embodied invites you, "Come unto me." Are we doubtful if we are among the invited, and trouble ourselves with wearisome cares, anxieties, and doubts, hear Him again? "All ye that are weary and heavy laden." Your wearisomeness of heart, your burdensome state of mind, are the very recommendations: "Come." And listen to the blessing promised, "I will give you rest,"—divine rest.

This rest implies complete victory over evil, deliverance from worldly care, and the removal of the fear of death. There can be no rest while the conflicts between virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, agitate the soul, much less while evil is there unstruggled with; for lusts, like wild beasts, are ever restless. But the rest given by the Saviour is the rest of His divine peace: the sweet calm of sin subdued, and goodness diffused over the soul. This is a peace flowing from the centre of the spirit, and diffusing itself through every fibre as streams of blessedness. It is like the peace of a bright summer over the soul, where all is beauty, all is life, and all is harmony. A holy fulness is there, but, because of the according sweetness of all things, a holy rest. None but one Being can truly say, "I will give you rest."

The rest from worldly care follows the other; the greater includes the less. He who really receives continual victory over his evils, will be satisfied that his Saviour will care for him in this life also. He will be assured that He who cares for the sparrow will never forsake him. He will seek the kingdom of God above all things, and will be satisfied that all needful earthly good will likewise be afforded. His wants will be moderate, and while he does his duty he will be content with what the Providence, which gives its beauty to the lily, shall daily afford to him. Thus, also, will the words be fulfilled, "I will give you rest."

And the last source of unrest will be removed. To those who have received the Saviour's peace, death has been transformed. He is no longer a dreaded enemy, but an angelic friend. He is the herald of heaven; the messenger of everlasting life. His approach gives no disturbance, since we have felt the power of the divine words, "I will give you rest."

Blessed, then, for ever blessed, be the divine goodness which came nigh to us in the person of the Son; that entered into our nature and glorified it, that God and man might for ever be united in Him, and He might thus be the head of all things, and by Him all things should consist. May we never seek to know the Father elsewhere than in the Son. For there He is revealed as mercy, love, and tenderness unutterable. In Him we may find peace.

SERMON XXVII.

THE SON PRAYING TO THE FATHER.

“ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ”—Matt. xxvii. 46.

“ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”—John x. 17, 18.

THE agonizing words which are at the commencement of our text, were spoken at the most solemn juncture which has ever occurred. The Divine Man was at the depth of His suffering. He was the one marked object of the malice of earth and hell. There was no sorrow like His sorrow. The world He came to save had crucified Him. His disciples had forsaken Him. None of those who had followed Him for years, and witnessed His goodness and His miracles remained, but a few women and the beloved John. His own nation now fully rejected Him. They had treated His person with similar signs of mock homage, but real opposition, with which they had treated His Word, and now they completed their wickedness by murder, from undisguised malice. They hated the mental Word, and the Incarnate Word, with a similar hatred, and destroyed both as far as they could. All things corresponded to this dreadful act. The land was wrapped in gloom; the sun was darkened. Two malefactors were crucified with Him, one hardened, the other inwardly good. The locality was called Golgotha, the place of a skull. There, hung the illustrious sufferer; without, falsely assailed, tortured, crucified, by wicked men; within, assailed by all the powers of darkness. “ This is your hour,” he said, “ and the power of darkness.”—Luke xxii. 53.

“ He trod the dismal vale of death,
The human form resigned its breath,
And like a mortal died!
But death was trod beneath his feet,
He rose both God and Man complete,
His human glorified!”

There are intimations in many parts of the Word, that the most terrible pains the Lord suffered were not those of the body, excruciating though these were. In the first prophecy, which spoke of a seed of the woman which should save us from the effects of the fall, it is said of the serpent, the symbol of self, both in men and spirits, "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The head of the serpent is to be found in that great mass of selfishness which exists under the name of "the powers of darkness." The Lord would bruise the head, but they should bruise his heel. In the Prophets, in the Psalms, in the Gospel, the redemption the Lord would effect is constantly shewn to be a deliverance of mankind from the powers of darkness; a difficult deliverance. Thus the prophet says, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob."—Isa. xlix. 24—26. Again: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave (*hades*); I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues. O grave (*hades*), I will be thy destruction." The Lord gave several intimations in the Gospel of His approaching conflict with the powers of darkness. In that divine discourse in which He instructed Philip that He was our heavenly Father Himself, He also said, "Hereafter, I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."—John xiv. 30. On another occasion the Lord said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 31, 32. This He said in relation to His death."—Ver. 33. In the Book of Psalms, one occurs which commences with the words of the Lord's exclamation on the cross, which forms the first portion of our text—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It has also two other allusions to the circumstances connected with the crucifixion, which are quoted in the Gospel. There can be no doubt, therefore, that it describes the scene of the Lord's death, and the sorrows which then enveloped Him. And they are thus described: "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones:

they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns."—Psalm xxii. 16—21.

Here the powers of evil are described by the terms, "dogs," "assembly of the wicked," "the sword," "the lion." And these are said to compass him about—to enclose Him. Their subtle, terrible, and malignant influences, superadded to the physical tortures, were what constituted the chief sorrows of the Redeemer. They operated upon what was left of the merely human, with every infernal suggestion, to turn him aside, or to baffle Him in His divine work of saving the world: but, happily for us, in vain.

And here we must make another reflection. We sometimes think that temptations will be bitter in proportion to the amount of evil in any one. But the case is not so. Temptation is bitter in proportion to the good we have in us. We are young in the ways of religion, and goodness has acquired little power in us; a temptation makes but little anguish in the soul. We resist and overcome, it may be, but the disturbance has been comparatively small. When, however, we have advanced far in the regenerate life, and divine things have heightened their value in us, so that we tremble for their safety, a temptation, when it comes, is felt to agitate and agonize the whole soul. When a temptation threatens the loss of what we value slightly, it but slightly pains; but when it threatens the destruction of what we value more than life, it strikes, as it were, against the very fibres of our being.

If a mother sees some object of rude household value likely to be crushed by the wheel of a heavy cart, she would fain save it probably, but for it she feels comparatively but little concern. If, however, she sees her darling child in similar danger, then she is roused to the intensest feeling. She flies, she shrieks, she agonizes, she calls on heaven and earth for help; and if she succeed in rescuing the babe, her gratitude is unspeakable. The pain of danger is then in proportion to our love for the object endangered. The pain then of temptation is in proportion to the value we have for goodness, for our souls, and for the Lord's kingdom. The temptations of advanced life are much more grievous than those of early life. We feel, with all the power of life-deep feelings, the awful wreck of heaven lost, and a ruined soul. This may faintly assist us to conceive of the awful

agony of the Lord's last struggle, the passion, the suffering, of the cross. The salvation of the universe was the great object of His life, death, and resurrection. All the infernal powers were His opponents. His love was divine. The Humanity had to bear the conflict as of itself, receiving help from the Divine only hiddenly and distantly; just as man has to bear his temptations as of himself: for "He was tempted in all points like as we are." As, therefore, the temptation continued and increased, the gloom would gather around, and within, the darkness and the sorrow would increase, as it is with man. The light and the warmth of Divine Love and Wisdom would be perceived less and less, and at length would seem to be gone, and then would come the agonizing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Here, let us remark, that some have conceived the weightiest suffering the Saviour had to bear to be the displeasure of the Father, deserved by man, but poured upon Him as man's substitute. And, looking from this point of view, they have regarded the Lord's words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39), as expressive of this infliction from the Father. Nothing, however, can be more foreign from their true sense. The will of the Father is the will of Infinite Divine Love for the salvation of the human race. "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life."—John vi. 40. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—John iii. 16. That the Divine Love caused the Humanity to bear all that earth and hell could inflict is true, but that any sufferings were inflicted by the Father, is an idea totally unfounded and impossible. The words import nothing of the kind. They imply that the cup came from some other quarter, not from the Father Himself. It is true we may infer that the Father might, if He would, have suffered the cup to pass, and that He would not: that in the language of the prophet Isaiah, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He hath put Him to grief."—Isa. liii. 10. But we must bear in mind that if the Lord had not been tempted and suffered, His Humanity would not have been glorified, and if His Humanity had not been glorified the human race could not have been saved. It was love that impelled Him to suffer for us, not wrath. Divine Love would not spare a single tear, a single groan, a single pang, because, thereby, Redemption would have failed. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"—Luke xxiv. 26.

We may illustrate this by the case of a patriot, who sees his country bleeding under oppression from the yoke of tyrants, everywhere crushing down its energies and destroying its strength, preying upon its children. Suppose such a one to see in vision, before entering on his dangerous labours, the sorrows, the pains, the wounds, the captivity, it may be the almost death he must undergo before his country could be freed, and shrunk from the peril, yet urged on by his love to sacrifice himself for his country's good, we should see a faint imitation of the case of the Saviour. His love would not suffer the cup of sorrow to be passed undrained, though nature shrank from it. So was it with the Lord. The Humanity shrank from the dreadful agony, the multiplied affliction, but the divine love for man's salvation persevered, the cup was drained to the bottom, and man was saved. "Jesus died, and rose, and revived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living."—Rom. xiv. 10.

We may take another illustration of the power of love which will not spare suffering, when it is needed, for some great good, either of the sufferer, or through him of others.

Suppose a child, most fondly loved, with powers likely to be a blessing to himself and to the world, but afflicted with some malformation which only a severe surgical operation could cure. Without the operation, he would be a burden to himself and of little use to mankind; with it, he would be a benefit to his race. The wise love of his parents would bring him to the pain. The child, at the sight of the preparation, would shrink, and under the knife would cry piteously to his parents to save him, to take him away. But a wise far-seeing love would forbid them to do so. They would seem to him to be hard, while in "all his afflictions they would be afflicted." The power of love would keep them firm, though deeply moved. The greater the suffering necessary, the greater the love to cause them to be endured, for the sake of the ultimate triumph. So was it with the Divine Love, the Father within the Lord. Only with Him it was not the suffering of another, but His own suffering in the Humanity for the salvation of the human race. He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him (Isa. lxiii. 3). "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."—Isa. liii. 4, 5. We did esteem Him smitten of God, but, in reality, He was smitten by the evil of both earth and hell, while He was in very deed God,

reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. v. 19). While He bruised the serpent's head, the serpent bruised His heel (Gen. iii. 15).

That the Lord's sufferings were those of temptations endured from the powers of darkness, is confirmed by His reply to the mother of James and John, when she requested they might sit, one on His right hand and one on His left, in His kingdom. He said, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, except* to whom it is prepared of my Father."—Matt. xx. 22, 23. The cup which these disciples would drink of could only mean the sufferings which they would have to go through from human and spiritual persecutors: the trials of soul, and the pains of body, which they would have to endure. Yet this is called drinking of the cup which He drank of, and being baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized. The sufferings of the Lord, then, were the pains inflicted by His assailants, especially His infernal ones, corresponding to those we suffer in temptation, but with this difference, that whereas we are opposed and tempted by one, or a few infernals, He was tempted by all hell. When the enemy came in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord lifted up a standard against Him, and the Redeemer came to Zion (Isa. lix. 19, 20).

We would next draw attention to the fact, that in all cases of temptation and mental trial, the consciousness is double, or even manifold. The part where we suffer complains, and strongly attracts attention to itself. The higher principles of the soul sympathize and console. The distinction is so great, occasionally, that it seems almost as if different personalities were within us, but of course it is only an appearance. The evil principle roused up tempts us to sin, it entices, it persuades, it attracts to evil; the love of right resists, and when the temptation becomes severe, it cries out with the apostle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—Rom. vii. 24. Memory says, recollect who has delivered you a thousand times in days gone by: Faith, with firm and trustful tone, points to the Saviour, whose help is omnipotent, and who has said, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last." Patience exhorts to wait and endure, "for he who endures to the end shall be saved." Hope whispers of brighter, better things,

* So in the original. Digitized by Google

and speaks of the glorious future which awaits the conquering Christian. All these seem like distinct voices, but they are all from principles in the mind of the same man. The mind has several regions, and these often feel and think differently at the same time. Have you never noticed the atmosphere, which seems to the careless observer to be one? Its lower region, on a troubled night, is rough and tempestuous. The clouds career along wildly, and assume the most fantastic forms. Above these, however, you observe another stratum, finer, whiter, and moving in quite an opposite direction. And, above all, there is the calm blue arch, deep, silent and majestic, in which the glorious moon holds on her peaceful way; and from which a calm quiet seems to descend, which betokens speedy rest. So is it in the turbulences of the soul. Storms rage in its lower atmosphere, tossings of mind and vexations of spirit there harass and annoy, hurrying to worldly tumult and distress. But above, there is a current of an opposite kind, persuading to purity and rectitude. While deeply within, there reigns a grounded communion with the highest. The sun of His love, or the moon of His wisdom, shines gloriously there, and thence descends a spirit of inward peace, which in due time subdues the storm and tranquillizes the whole mind.

Such being the case with the soul, we need not be surprized at those declarations of the Scriptures which speak of man as having double and contrary consciousness. Thus, in the Psalms: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."—Chap. xlii. 11. Here the higher principle of the soul addresses the lower when it is cast down, and calls it to trust and hope. The lower is depressed, and the higher hopeful; but they are not two souls. They are only two degrees of the same soul, like the two regions of the atmosphere.

Jacob in speaking of his wicked sons, says, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united."—Gen. xlix. 6. That would be a strange interpretation which made Jacob, his soul, and his honour, three distinct persons, because they are thus personified. In the gospel the Lord represents the rich covetous man as addressing his soul, and saying, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."—Luke xii. 19. The rich man and his soul were undoubtedly one person, though two regions of mind are implied in the conversation. In the Greek language two words are provided for the distinct

regions of the soul. *Pneuma* designates the higher, while *psyche* denotes the lower region: in the Latin language the same distinction is expressed by *mens*, the upper, and *anima*, the lower region of the mind. But both are inclosed in one person, one man.

Granting that different principles in the same mind are sometimes, both in the Scriptures and in other writings, represented by different speakers and other personifications, it may be asked, How are we to know when the speakers mean different persons, and when they are only personified principles? The answer is not difficult. When either from the known nature of the case, or from direct declaration, we know that the speakers are one within the other, we may be assured that they relate only to one person, however many principles may be described, and however different the sensations described really are. A man and his soul for instance. They are one within the other, and are obviously, therefore, only one person, though represented as speaking to each other. In this way we may discern the distinction as to principle, and yet the union as to person, of the Father and the Son. They were like the two degrees of the human mind; the *pneuma* and the *psyche*. The consciousness would be different so long as the Son was not completely glorified, especially in times of temptation and suffering. The Father was beyond all temptation and all suffering. Nothing could sully infinite divine perfections. The Father is the All-perfect Divine Love. The Son, being the Humanity in which the Word or divine truth was received into a human organization, could be tempted, and could suffer; could be agitated almost as we are agitated, but ever with a certain difference, as even here He was not merely human. He was the only-begotten Son of the Father. Just as in the lower degree of the mind we frequently are disturbed, suffer, and are deeply depressed, while from the higher degree come urgent exhortations to trust, faith, and hope. At times the suffering is so great that all cheering light is excluded, and we seem entirely closed up for a period, happily not often long, from hope and comfort: so was it with the Lord in the depth of His sorrow, marked by the despairing cry.

The different states of feeling experienced by the Lord, appear to be intimated in the accounts of the crucifixion as given by the evangelists, and in the order in which the gospels occur. In Matthew and Mark the Lord is described as uttering the agonizing words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me:" expressive of the deepest suffering, even to despair. Such would be the awful agony felt in the lower region of the Saviour's consciousness in the depth of His fearful conflict. The interior

lights of His Divine Love and Wisdom would, for the time, disappear, and apparently unaided and alone, He would have to sustain the direful horrors of the dark valley in which He was. Who that has felt the bitterness of temptation, such as we experience when one dark cloud after another rolls over us, does not experience the intensest sympathy with the crucified? But what is our sorrow compared to His? All the malignant powers of darkness were doing their utmost not to be despoiled of their prey. A whole ocean of vileness and wickedness was rolling its tremendous waves against this only hope of the universe. Wave after wave beat on. Anguish after anguish was experienced. The darkness thickened within the sacred Sufferer. To symbolize this, the sun was shut out, and darkness covered the whole land. At this juncture, to express this state, and to mark the similiarity of the Saviour's experience in kind, though immeasurably deeper in degree to ours, the appalling cry was heard, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" We, in the depths of our misery, make a similar cry. It is not true that the Lord has forsaken us, but we express our feelings, and must speak as it appears. In like manner the Divine had not forsaken the Human in the Lord, but such was also the appearance.

In the Gospel according to Luke there is no account of the agonizing cry of our text. It has been noticed by close observers that the different gospels when they describe the same general scene, do so one after another in a more interior manner. This appears very strikingly in the subject before us. Luke says nothing of the despairing cry uttered by the Redeemer, and he describes only the utterances which express the inner feelings of the Divine Humanity, and its entire harmony with the Divine Love. Of His tormentors, He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" intimating His full acquiescence in the impulses of mercy and love. He is next represented as exercising His Divine Sovereignty in relation to the penitent malefactor: "To-day, shalt thou be with me in paradise," thus displaying His knowledge of the real state of the man, and His fitness for paradise, as well as admitting that He is the being who can admit His creatures into His "kingdom;" and lastly, He said, "Father into thy hands I commit my spirit;" thus intimating the entire devotion of the now sanctified humanity to the Father. In Luke, there is nothing of the despairing distress expressed which is so manifest in the first two gospels, but yet there is a slight conscious distinction of the Son from the Father manifested; the cessation of which is intimated by the words :

“Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.” Hence we may infer that Luke describes the Lord as to the sensations of a degree in His Humanity higher than that described by the two former evangelists.

John speaks of no words of pain, nor of any that imply a feeling of separation of the Son from the Father. The Lord is represented as caring for His mother according to the flesh, yet not recognizing her as His mother now, but rather as the mother of John. He called her woman. He said to Mary, directing her attention to the beloved disciple, “Woman, behold thy son.” And to John He said, “Behold thy mother;” thus disclosing the end of all human relation to Mary, and in a figure displaying His care for His Church of which the mother Mary was then the representative, and whose genuine sons are such as, like John, are in true charity or love for the brethren. The Lord added shortly after, “I thirst,” and then having received vinegar put on hyssop, He said, “It is finished; and gave up the ghost.” All here is expressive of divine care for His Church rather than attention to bodily or mental pain. For the Lord thirsts for communion with His creatures that He may bless them. He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. He would not drink the vinegar mixed with gall, but that mixed with hyssop He received. The vinegar or spoiled wine represented truth perverted or falsified, and when mixed with gall, it signifies error united to evil; this the Lord cannot receive. When on the hyssop, the vinegar still represents error, but error united to purposes of amendment; this the Lord will receive. The whole of this description is indicative of the peaceful love of a region far above the sensation of personal pain.

The distinction of consciousness in the fully glorified, and the not yet fully glorified portions of the Lord's Humanity is strikingly exhibited in the second text which we have selected for this discourse. “I lay down my life (psyche), that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” —John x. 17. 18. This commandment have I received of my Father. Here the life laid down must of course refer to that portion of the Lord which could suffer and die; (the psyche,) the lower degree of life and bodily feeling. Then the “I that laid the life down, and took it again,” must refer to a higher region which was previously glorified, and perfectly united to the Father. This was already divine, and this raised again that portion which was through the last sufferings made perfect. Yet both of these, the raiser and the raised, manifestly

were the Lord. The external was suffering, the internal was already God, made divine from the Father, and from it all the further sanctification and perfection of the humanity proceeded to the resurrection. Whether, therefore, we say the Lord Jesus raised Himself from the dead, according to what He declared He would do; or we say God raised Him from the dead, the same thing is implied, for we must ever bear in mind that God was in Him; that as to His inner nature He was the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and at length as to His whole humanity He became perfectly divine, so that it could be said, "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows."—Heb. i. 8, 9.

In the Lord's prayer to the Father, and especially in the exclamation on the cross, there is no evidence that the Lord and God whom He addressed, or the Father, were separate persons, but only that in the humanity so far as it was unglorified, there was necessarily a consciousness different from that which existed in the inner region where the Divine Love and Wisdom, the Father and God, were in infinite perfection. This difference of consciousness existed until the full glorification of the Lord's humanity, but no longer; the third day He was perfected.

And, now, we must notice a strange idea which is entertained by those who suppose the Lord had a divine person in Him separate from His humanity, and also separate from the Father. These sometimes bring forward the exclamation on the cross to prove that the Son and the Father are two separate divine persons, although they must admit that this exclamation came from what suffered intense agony in the Lord, and this could only be what was human, for what was divine could not suffer. Manifestly then the exclamation was the outcry of the suffering human to the divine, for help, and proves nothing but that. But, while it is admitted, that the suffering human cried for help, had there been a divine person belonging to Himself separate from the Father how was it He did not cry to this His own divine person, or at least take some notice of him? why cry only to the Father, and address the Father? Surely, in this most solemn, awful, and trying hour, when evidently the human nature of our blessed Lord was suffering all that could be inflicted upon it, had there been a second divine person in Him distinct from, but omnipotent as the Father, the Saviour would have looked up to and implored the help of this His own proper divine person.

Can any one conceive, He would have gone round him, as it were, and addressed another, taking no notice of this his own peculiar divinity, and imploring the Father for help. This consideration alone would suffice with a reflecting mind to suspect that what did not appear at a crisis so momentous as the Lord's last passion, really had no existence. The only proper divine person is He who, as to His interior nature, was the Father and God within the Saviour, as to His external, yet not fully glorified, was capable of suffering, did suffer, and by suffering was made perfect.

The exclamation on the cross—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"—was recorded, to shew the strict analogy between the temptation by which He sanctified Himself, and those by which we are regenerated. We have a divided consciousness in temptation; so had He. We seem gradually to lose sight of all our holiest feelings; so did He. We at last seem to be completely forsaken, and finally to utter a despairing prayer; and so did our great prototype and head. As in man's case, however, the higher feelings which are obscured, and at length seem to become absent in temptation, are really part of him, as well as his lower and suffering ones, and are his prevalent tone of mind on other occasions, so was it with the Lord. As with man, when the temptation is over, the higher principles return, and when the last is over, they return to be his governing principles for ever, so was it with the Lord. The Father, who seemed to be absent in His temptations, was not really so; the sun, which appears to be gone on a cloudy day, is as near to the earth as ever, acts as powerfully for its benefit, and reappears as soon as the dark mass rolls by. When the temptation and suffering in a particular case was over, the Divinity appeared more fully to manifest itself in the Humanity, and it was seen more manifestly that "the Father and He were one," that "all things which the Father hath are His," so that every one who "saw Him saw the Father." Thus the whole Scriptures harmonize, and we can adore one glorious God, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords."

And if we do not acknowledge God as being truly in the person of the Lord Jesus as well as the Humanity which He suffered, what becomes of all those passages which declare Jehovah God Himself would become our Saviour, that "He was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16); "God was Christ" (2 Cor. v. 19); "The Word was God" (John i. 1); "Christ was God over all, blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5). God did not properly exist in the person of the Lord Jesus

then God never became incarnate, and all the prophecies which declare that Jehovah would become the Saviour, have never been fulfilled. But can we indeed admit this? What, when the Eternal Himself declares, "I, even I, am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour!"—Isa. xliii. 11. "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."—Isa. xlv. 6. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."—Isa. xlv. 22. "I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me; for there is no Saviour beside me.—Hosea xiii. 4. Shall we not receive the testimony? And if we admit that Jesus was Jehovah our God as to His interior nature, then the God to whom He appealed and cried must be that interior divine nature which, when the Humanity was in extreme sorrow, was for a time obscured. When the suffering was over, the obscurity passed by, and the Divine Love and Wisdom manifestly took possession of the whole nature of the Lord, then "Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God."—John xx. 28. And the Lord Jesus, sending from the Father within the emanations of light and love, mercy and peace, breathed upon the disciples among whom He stood, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit."—John xx. 22.

Let us not, then, make the very tenderest manifestations of the Lord's love, in what He suffered for us to bring us to Himself, the means of turning us elsewhere to adore, but rather as the grandest attraction to draw us to Himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all men unto me."—John xii. 32. Each sorrow, each suffering, each pain, should be a fresh golden link to bind us to Him who lived and died for us, and now ever reigns as the Almighty, in Divine Human form (Rev. i. 8).

Lastly, let us learn to be faithful unto death, and to rest assured, by our Lord's example, of "full deliverance." The Lord who descended from heaven and died for us will assuredly never fail us, nor forsake us. He who liveth, and was dead, lives for ever and ever, as a Mediator, an Intercessor, a new and living way between fallen man and the invisible Father, by which He can dwell in us, and we in Him.

In our trials, however, while we follow the Lord in the regeneration, we may be, and probably shall be, sorely tried. Our expectations may be thwarted, our hopes blighted, our deliverance delayed. The things upon which we set our hearts, may altogether fail, at least to appearance, and we may be brought into

states of gloom, dejection, and almost to despair. Our Lord was so, and why not we? "The servant is not greater than his Lord." Let us not repine, but patiently bear. Let us bravely suffer in his strength who sanctified Himself that we might be sanctified by the truth. Trust on, love on, labour on, believe on, should be our steady motto. Our Lord's presence and example ever sustaining us,—

"Amazing mercy! Love immense,
Surpassing every human sense,
Since time and sense began;
That man might shun the realms of pain,
And know and love his God again,
His God became a man."

The darkest hour of night is just before the morning. The darkest period of temptation is just before deliverance. It may appear to us that no help is nigh; that the Lord takes no notice of us; that billow after billow rolls over us, and at last we shall be overwhelmed. Nay, a time may come, in which it may seem that we are completely forsaken, and left to the malice of our enemies. But it is not really so. Divine mercy never forsakes us. We are watched over with infinite care, when we seem most left to ourselves. And if we are more deeply tried than usual, it is to purify us more thoroughly and prepare us for more lasting and more glorious peace. The soil that has been most penetrated by winter's frost is most mellowed for the summer's harvest. The jewel that has been most rubbed will be most brilliant. The suffering is temporary; the gain is everlasting. The cross of to-day will soon pass, the crown of to-morrow will be worn for ever. Should then a dark hour come over us in which all good seems to fail, and gloom and sadness multiply beyond measure, yet let us trust in the Lord, and in quiet confidence stand by the right, gently bearing on. The dreary time will pass, as it did with the Lord Himself, and the fearful sorrow will be turned to lasting joy. 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."—Isa. l. 10. And as surely as the same Jesus who suffered was exalted, and had a name given to Him which is above every name: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," Phil. ii. 10, so surely—

"From all our distresses salvation shall spring,
The deeper our sorrows the sweeter we'll sing."

Let us greatly beware of making the grandest act of Divine mercy the means of hiding from ourselves one great purpose of

the incarnation, that of bringing God Himself to His creature's view. No man had seen God at any time, but the only-begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father, He declared Him, or brought Him to view (John i. 18). We need a definite idea of the God we worship, we cannot love an abstraction. To meet this want of His creatures God manifested Himself. In Jesus, God displayed His love, His wisdom, His power, His pity. There was no further room for hesitation as to the real character of God. He who saw Jesus saw the Father (John xiv. 9). In Him we can love all that is pure, loving, merciful, and forbearing even unto death, breathing forgiveness even on the cross, and have no fear of being rejected if we sincerely seek Him. Our love to God needs nourishing, and oh, what a strength it receives by the contemplation of Him as the Saviour! Great is the divine benevolence displayed in the works of creation, in the gifts of food, raiment, and habitation, and all our bodily blessings. But far greater is the love which follows us in our evils, and seeks to save us from them: which did for us all that Jesus did, and promised to be always near us as a Saviour. Do we wonder that He hid His glories while He sojourned on earth? It was of His divine order to do so, and was so prophesied. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour."—Isa. xlv. 15.

He had not only to display the energies of God in our redemption, however, but, by the wondrous lesson of His glorification, to teach us how to become prepared for heaven. To do this He must be in all points tempted as we are. He must unfold the bravery of bearing. He must afford a divine example of suffering and yet blessing, of repaying evil with good. For this end "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as the sheep before the shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." This sublime lesson of triumphing by endurance is especially divine. Hence that line of Rousseau, "Socrates died like a martyr, but Jesus Christ like a God."

We cannot too highly value the acts of His divine life and death as unerring examples to be followed by us all; examples quite as needful to teach us how patiently to suffer, as to teach us how to triumph. But these examples could not have been fully given without the last dreadful grief upon the cross, and the piercing cry of the Humanity at its most fearful agony. Let us be grateful, then, that our Heavenly and Omnipotent Father became our Saviour and Father. Let us adoringly tell

And while we ponder over the gospel of good tidings which was ushered in by angelic song, the wonderful grandeur of the divine work of deliverance and salvation will rise upon us in all their majesty, as supplying the great link previously wanting between God and His intelligent, but fallen creatures ; and we shall rejoice, from the inmost of our hearts, to say with the prophet, " Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given," and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace."

SERMON XXVIII.

SAVING FAITH, AND FAITH NOT SAVING.

“Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”—Luke vii. 50.

FAITH is the soul's confidence in the Lord. It is holy trust. No one can make any spiritual advancement without faith. It is childlike reliance on the truth, and on the goodness of the Lord. By faith we depend on truth and reject error. By faith we come to the Lord and are accepted. By faith we implore His strength, and have those spiritual miracles effected which heal our sorrows, renew our souls, and cause our flesh to come again as the “flesh of a little child.” Faith holds the lamp of the Word and enlightens our path. Faith, like a moon, shines in the spirit's darkness, and is an evidence that the sun still shines, and will surely rise again. Faith is our guide in life, our guardian in death, and our herald in eternity. It is the grand instrument of salvation,—“Thy faith hath saved thee.”

Our theme to-day is saving faith, and faith not saving; or true faith, and false faith. And we must solicit your most earnest and affectionate attention while we discuss the nature of each, and the difference between the two; for as true faith is a source of unspeakable blessings, a false faith is a dangerous snare. May the promised Spirit of our Lord guide us into all truth on this important subject. Let us further consider how faith is attained, and what is its intrinsic and genuine character. It has sometimes been spoken of as a gift of God quite independent of evidence or any intellectual exercise. But this blind belief, thus thought to be obtained, is not faith; it is superstition, and not a blessing: but one of the greatest of calamities.

Faith really is a heartfelt belief in God's truth, as revealed in His Word, and is a compound principle. It is formed partly of the truth we receive in proportion as we understand it, and partly of the affection in which we receive the truth, and this is

imparted to us from the Lord in proportion as we obey Him. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."—Rom. x. 17. Here is the first part, the Word must be heard, and we may add understood, for "When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the wayside."—Matt. xiii. 19. The second element is the love of truth. Without this there can be no faith, nor any salvation: "With the heart a man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation."—Rom. x. 10. Faith cannot be alone in the sense of having only one element in it. In such case, it is knowledge, not faith: "With the heart a man believeth unto righteousness." Truth, in which there is no heart, is cold and cheerless, having none of the saving powers of faith about it.

The first great truth of faith is, that God is; but it grows with every fresh discovery of Divine Wisdom which is received in love. The apostle says: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him (God), for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."—Heb. xi. 6. And, undoubtedly, these truths are not only in harmony with revelation, but with our best reason: what faith perceives, reason confirms.

Faith is exceedingly small and weak at first. The Lord compares it with a grain of mustard-seed, and calls that the least of all seeds (Matt. xiii. 31). And it is not difficult to discern the reason. When religious truth is first awakened in the soul, it is raised from the chambers of memory where it has slumbered since a father's counsel and a mother's care stored the young spirit with the seed of future blessing. Other knowledge has been learned and prized and cultivated, but this has been suffered to remain like seed in the hand of a mummy, shrivelled and outwardly dead. It has, however, a strange vitality in it, and when the spirit becomes aroused by the inspiring call to prepare for a higher life, and the heart becomes affected, the despised seed begins to grow, and advances until it becomes a great tree, under which all the birds of heaven can make their nests. That faith is a growing principle is evident from its constitution: for as it comes from hearing the Word of God in love, of course the more we hear and understand the more vigorous our faith will be. In this sense the disciples prayed to the Lord to encrease their faith. We read also of some who were weak in faith; others who were strong in faith; of those whose faith groweth exceedingly; of little faith, and of great faith, all which

expressions shew that it is a state of mind which grows with the growth of goodness, grace, and wisdom in the soul.

We have observed that faith comes by hearing; but all who hear do not believe. The most eloquent unfolder of divine truth may give the most brilliant expositions of its sacred claims, and by some it will be welcomed and adopted; on others, the effect will be transient or none. Again, we ask in what consists the ground of difference? The Lord gives the answer: "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."—John iii. 20, 21. The apostle states the same truth, when he says, "Charity, (or love, as it should be rendered,) rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."—1 Cor. xiii. 6. "Love believeth all things" (ver. 7). The groundwork of faith, then, is love; where this is present there will be a reception of truth when it is presented; where this is wanting, there will be an aversion to truth, and no faith will be the result of the most earnest and eloquent entreaties in its favour. Experience teaches the same lessons, and the experience of ages has embodied itself in the proverbs: "Where there's a will, there's a way." "None are so blind as those who will not see." "Convince a man against his will, he's of the same opinion still." The parable of the sower who went out to sow, teaches the same fact. The seed was sown on all kinds of ground, but only that which fell upon good ground took proper root and sprang up so as to bring forth, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some a hundredfold. The good ground, the Lord said, is an "honest and good heart." It may indeed be objected by those who teach that faith is the gift of God, quite independent of effort on the part of man, that if some people are like the wayside, others like the stony ground, and others like the good ground, only the latter can bring forth fruit because God has made them so. But we reply, each man is like a universe, and has every kind of ground in him. According as he acts, one or other kind of ground becomes the ruling disposition in him. If he does good, he comes to the light, as the Lord said, and he believes in the light, and rejoices in it.

Love, then, is the life and very essence of faith. There is a deeper meaning than at first appears in those words of the Lord, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." He has it already in the living principle of love for the truth, which already glows within him. "Whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

But the love that is the soul of faith must not be regarded as a sentiment merely, but as an active principle. "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10), said the apostle Paul; and the apostle John stated the same truth, when he said, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."—1 John v. 3. Love that does not keep the commandments is a maudlin sentimentality, and not genuine love at all. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."—John xiv. 21. "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings."—Ver. 24. Hence, real love which produces real faith, will also produce real good works. The whole three, in truth, go together. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."—Gal. v. 6. If faith is genuine it has its root in love, and produces the fruits of virtuous works. A living faith, how wonderful and glorious it is! It is grounded in love. "He that believeth in me HATH everlasting life. It gives the soul to perceive and feel, with the deepest concern, the leprosy of sin. Like the little Syrian maid in the household of Naaman the leper, it says, "Would, God, that my master were with the prophet that is in the midst of Israel!" When the heart sinks under the consciousness of its pollution, Faith says, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Go, and wash seven times in Jordan, and thy flesh shall become like that of a little child." Faith is a child-like confidence in the love and the omnipotence of the Lord Jesus. With Philip, it says, "Lord, shew us the Father;" and when the Saviour replies, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," it believes and trusts. With Thomas it falls before Jesus, and cries out, "My Lord and my God;" and with Peter, it exclaims, "Lord, to whom shall we go: Thou hast the words of eternal life!" This gracious confidence sees the Lord ever before it in a Divine Human Form, smiling upon our efforts to live for Him; extending His hand when we stumble; and giving us the crown of victory when we are tried and triumph. Faith follows wherever the Lord calls. When He says, "Come," with Peter it is ready to go upon the stormy sea of a turbulent world, and if it trembles amidst the boisterous waves of human life, it looks to Him, and cries, "Lord, save me."

Faith, thus livingly connected with the Lord Jesus, embodies His image in itself, becomes gradually moulded to His will, and confidently expects that entire conformity to heavenly love which the worldling deems impossible. "All things are possible to him

that believeth." "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 14). Faith says every passion and lust shall be subdued. "The lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon, shalt thou trample under feet."—Psalm xci. 13. This faith, which is small as a grain of mustard-seed at first, but like the mustard-seed is warm and living, grows with our obedience to the divine commandments, until it becomes a commanding system, covering, blessing, and protecting the whole life and mind. It is a tree of the Lord, full of sap, and throws one glorious branch over our friendships, and only encourages heartfelt connections with such as are friends of our Divine Master, and fellow-walkers on the way of life: another branch it throws over our home, and seeks to make it the sweet centre of a thousand virtues and graces, a heaven in miniature: other branches are thrown over our business engagements: others over our worship; and others again over our pleasures; until our faith has become a great tree, in the branches of which all the birds of our heaven, the thoughts which soar above the common places of life, can make their nests.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen (Heb. xi. 1). It is the union of truth and love. Truth from the Word brings evidence of the existence, the laws, and the glories of the life beyond the grave. The power and the beauty of the unseen spheres of things which address themselves to the spirit; the unseen friends who welcome us after death; the glorious unseen home to which they conduct us; the Divine King who reigns there; these are the invisible realities on which faith dwells with delight and rejoices in the evidence; while the love that forms the essence of faith forms also the essence of heaven. Faith is itself the substance of things hoped for. The love which is the soul of faith is also the soul of heaven. The lamp of faith, supplied by the oil of love, is in the soul what the light of wisdom is to the heavens, everywhere glowing and golden from the warmth of love divine.

Life, illuminated by faith, acquires a certainty, a peace, and a charm, all unknown before. "The Lord is my shepherd," is the language of the soul, "I shall not want." "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. We have meat to eat of which the world knows not. We have a rock to stand upon which never can be moved. Is our way through the valley of natural sorrow and affliction, and does darkness come on? faith, like the moon, lends her friendly light, and we can even sing songs in the night. Are we assailed

by outward or inward enemies? there is still the abiding assurance, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall arise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17. At times, when our natural states bring us into discouragement, and our Lord gives us to see ourselves, and our yet unsubdued evils more deeply and fully than before, our lusts and passions assume a gigantic form and fearful aspect, and we shrink from the terrible task of encountering such monsters, for "there are giants in those days," and we seem "as grasshoppers in their sight." But faith, like Caleb and Joshua, stands forth and stills the people. "Let us go up at once and possess it," faith says, "for we are well able to overcome it."—Numb. xiii. 30.

Faith and fear are incompatibles. We know in whom we have believed, and in life and in death we are assured that "He is the First and the Last." Are we on the mountain of love with danger threatening from afar? faith, like the prophet, opens our eyes, and we see the "mountain full of horses and chariots of fire?" Are we in the gloom and in the storm? do we go down into the deeps? We then do business in great waters; we behold the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep (Ps. cvii. 24). And we learn how sweet is the time when He makes the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still; and we join in the grateful and adoring aspiration, Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! (Ver. 29, 31.)

Faith altogether transforms the character of death. To the natural man death is the gloomiest of all visions. He is the robber that takes from them all they have fondly loved. Death is the opposite of all they have called life. In the grave they are stripped of all their adornments, and without riches, without power, without attendants, what are they? or whither go they? These terrible considerations make death a subject from which the natural man shrinks with shuddering, and which he would be only too happy could he for ever pass by. But faith pierces the wall at the end of this dark valley, and lets in a light divine. The grisly horror we once thought death, becomes transformed into a beautiful messenger of heaven. The notes of wail and lamentation we formerly heard, are turned by faith into the tones of a golden harp, ever resounding with

"O grave, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?"

The riches of earth may go, but we have riches which will never

perish : we are rich in the sight of God. The world may pass away, but a brighter and a better world awaits us. "For us to live is Christ, but to die is gain." The whole of the clouds which lowered upon the termination of our path, are now like those of Raphael, full of angel's faces.

"Faith is the spirit's sweet control,
From which assurance springs;
Faith is the pencil of the soul,
That pictures heavenly things.

"Faith is the conquering host that storms
The battlements of sin;
Faith is the quickening soul that warms
The trembling heart within.

"O rock of Ages, Fount of bliss!
Thy needful help afford;
And let our constant prayer be this,
Increase my faith, O Lord."

Faith grounded in love always brings forth good works. If it does not do this, it is not real faith at all. The apostle James asserts the worthlessness of a faith which has no works, in the most marked manner. He says, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? can faith save him?" And here I would direct, especially, the attention of my hearers to the apostle's important and interesting teaching. "Can faith save him?" James asks. "Yes," say vast numbers, including all which are called orthodox Protestant Churches, "faith can save him, faith alone." But the apostle manifestly implies that it cannot. Hear him further, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so, FAITH, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS, IS DEAD, BEING ALONE."—James ii. 14—17. The apostle here undoubtedly teaches, that he who fancies he has faith alone, has no more intention to be truly religious than he who bids the naked and hungry be warmed and filled, but does nothing to contribute the means. Such a one cannot really desire to supply the needy with warmth and clothing. His deeds speak more powerfully than words. So judges the apostle, and so do all men judge in all cases, except this of religion. When we see a person testify friendship with his mouth, but in deeds manifesting enmity, we always believe the deeds. If we heard a person expressing the utmost desire to go to a beautiful city, but with ample opportunity never made the least preparation to go, nor stirred a step in its direction, we should say he did not really believe what he professed to believe upon the subject. We have a perfect conviction that, in the

ordinary concerns of life, what a man does is what he believes he ought to do, and if his language be different we esteem him insincere, or say he does not know his own mind. This is a simple and a true rule. What a man DOES is what he really BELIEVES, and so the apostle judges: hence, he proceeds, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."—Ver. 18. "Shew me thy faith," he says, "without thy works;" plainly intimating that it is impossible. The drunkard believes in his liquor; the gambler in his dice; the selfish man in his selfishness; the ambitious man in the glory of his fame; the thief in the sweetness of unlawful gains; the sensualist in his disgusting pleasures. These are their real beliefs, and all professions different from these are deceptions. If a man is not a doer of good works he must be a doer of evil works; and if he does evil works he must believe in them. He may believe that virtuous works would be better than vicious works, if his self-will had not to be overcome, his passions to be subdued, and his habits changed; but as he loves his vices too much to give them up, and goodness and heaven too little to pay the price of their attainment in self-sacrifice, he believes, upon the whole, that evil is better than good for him, or at least for the present. This, when stripped of its disguises, is the faith of a wicked man, however he may deceive himself that his faith is right, though his life is wrong.

There is a species of belief which may influence a person's conversation and his thoughts as a speculative matter, but may not at all enter into the life's love, which is the real man. Such a belief an infernal may have. He may speak like an angel, and only be the greater hypocrite. Hence the apostle says, "Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead."—Ver. 19, 20. How sad it is to think that from so many Christian pulpits it is incessantly declared that faith alone saves, that we must especially guard against having the least idea of anything but faith conducing to salvation, in the face of a world, yes, a professing Christian world, overrun with evil. Here is the great solution of the fearful problem, that with centuries of professed Christian teaching, and with forty thousand pulpits in active use in our land, so little Christ-like practice exists. The faith preached is that very faith alone, which the apostle says is dead. How can dead faith produce living religion?

James proceeds. "Was not Abraham our father justified

by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Yes, "justified by works," the apostle says. Justification, have said hosts of modern preachers, is by faith alone, and not in the least by works; but the apostle plainly affirms what they deny, and his doctrine produced virtuous men, who were the admiration of the heathen. His faith overcame the world. But some will say, "Did not Paul declare that Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness?" Why, so it was; and it was thus reckoned because it was a righteous faith, for it was a working faith. This was why it was reckoned for righteousness, and was righteous, and Abraham was justified by it, and by the works it produced at the same time.

The apostle Paul, equally with James, teaches that Christian works justify the doers of them. See his declaration, Romans ii. 13, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." Here we have the very self-same word, "justified," used by Paul, not in relation to believing only, but to doing. "The doers of the law shall be justified." He speaks, in the third chapter of the same epistle, it is true, of a man being justified by faith without the deeds of the law; and afterwards, of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness, without works; but we should be slow to believe that the apostle contradicts himself, or another apostle either. But we should remember the controversy of the time, between those who sought to continue Jewish ceremonial works, beginning with circumcision, and going through the whole ceremonial law, just according to the letter, at the same time that they acknowledged the Lord Jesus. Others maintained that the law was now abrogated in the letter, and that the spirit of the law and the principles of the Christian faith, were now all-sufficient. Paul was the great leader of these latter, and the epistle to the Romans was chiefly written to set forth his views upon that subject. Works, in this controversy, meant Jewish works, or even the keeping of the commandments from Jewish motives, that is for the sake of merit, or to make God your debtor, and consider heaven as fairly your due for keeping the law.

True faith is rooted in love, and results in good works. When James says that Abraham was justified by works, he means undoubtedly Christian works; good works in the sense our Lord used the expression when He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven,"—Matt. v. 16, but when Paul says, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God,"—Rom. iv. 2; he means works in

the Jewish and technical sense, that is meritorious and ceremonial works. Christian works, done in humility, from love and faith, do justify a man; but meritorious works do not, they are defiled with self-righteousness. Hence our Lord said, "So likewise ye, when ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."—Luke xvii. 10. We must do all that is commanded, but we must also confess, we have no merit in it.

Alas! that man with his imperfect efforts, either of love, or faith, or active virtue, should ever dream of merit, in the sight of Him "who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven."—Ps. cxiii. 6. What have we that we have not received? Our love is as much a gift of God, as our faith, and every effort to do good in like manner is imparted from His Divine Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.—Gal. v. 22, 23.

But equally unhappy is it when to avoid this fear of men attaching merit to their works, it is preached and insisted upon that good works are not necessary to salvation, that FAITH ALONE is the essential requisite for an inheritance in heaven. This strange irrational and unscriptural doctrine is the great secret bulwark of vice in this country. Each man secretly buoys himself up in an evil life, by the idea that there is plenty of time left for him to do that which he is constantly told he can do in five minutes or in a moment. "And to the mercies of a moment leaves, the vast concerns of an eternal scene." The evil-doer of every class determines to get the fruit of his iniquity and enjoy it in this world, and rely on believing, and a prayer at the last to make his peace with God, through the merits and sacred blood of the Redeemer. Thus the blood of the Redeemer is made an excuse for continuing in the sins, to abolish which, He lived, and died, and rose again. The public spectacle is almost monthly rendered of murderers, wretches whose life has been a compound of every other villany, and at length been consummated by a most hideous, dastardly, and cruel assassination, whose minds must long have been a miniature hell, where foulest thoughts and maddest passions have lurked and burrowed, are supposed by their unwise chaplains to be sent direct to heaven, if they can be persuaded to say on the eve of death, or at the gallows, that Christ has died for them. If they can be persuaded to say, what they are thus badgered to say, their death is declared most edifying. Sometimes there is an intense quarrel in the gaol and

in the papers between the chaplain and the priest as to THE FAITH OF villains, whose multiplied atrocities we shrink with loathing, even from reading; whose whole lives and habits proclaimed, that they had no faith in anything divine or sacred. Who can tell the injury done by these unholy squabbles? They spread far and wide the delusion that LIFE has no bearing on eternity; that the assertion of a man's faith, and the manner of his death are the only passports to heaven.

Of what importance can it be what creed men believed whose lives proclaimed aloud that they believed in nothing good? Blind leaders of the blind, attend to your Divine Master's injunction, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father who is in heaven.—Matt. vii. 21. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—Luke vi. 46. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in NO CASE enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 20.

How daring it is of minister's professing the religion of Christ, to warrant these people to appear safely before the tribunal, where every man will be judged according to his works, because they say they believe Christ died for them. No doubt Christ died for them, but of what avail is it, or of what consequence is it to believe Christ died for us, unless we shew we livingly receive this faith, by ourselves dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness?

One chaplain, a few short months ago, assured the public of the edifying faith of a culprit, who, when he was about to ascend the gallows, had forgotten what words he should use in prayer on the scaffold, and asked, was it, "Let us give thanks?" Surely such teachers can have no idea of heaven and its purities; no idea of the soul, its principles, its habits, and the laws of its changes; no idea of the value of life in the world, and its necessity to prepare for the higher life of a better world. But they might remember our Divine Master's oft repeated declaration that, "He will give unto every man as his work shall be.

Even in the Exeter Hall sermons, from which so much has been expected, and for which so much is done, still the one note is prominent, faith, faith, faith; believe, believe, believe. The sermons are said to be for the working classes. The working classes have been fearfully alienated from religion, and abound in sins and sorrows. They have had the common lot of fallen human obstinacy, against the loving laws of heaven, to seduce them to evil, and the example of the middle and higher classes

in too many instances has not been calculated to win them to better things. The church has been one huge mass of injustice, and wrong, which even Parliament has yet only partially rectified. These corruptions and wrongs have been the great alienators of the working classes, and they must be won to religion by these being reformed, as well as by the exposure of sin in themselves, and in all classes, as the great foe of human happiness. The essence of sin is injustice : the essence of religion is justice ; expressed in the Sacred Writings by righteousness. To win men from vice to virtue ; from evil to good, from self to Christ, is the grand work of religion. But it is evidently labour in vain to draw multitudes together to listen to the same reiterations about faith which they have heard until they were tired before ; and which they had seen produced no real justice or practical goodness in the men that preached it ; and which could not even save the church, whose one note it was, from being the hugest injustice in the world. To expect men to be converted by such means is simply absurd. The churches must repent, in their articles, their doctrines, and their practices ; and then preach real repentance to others. So will they become not sectarian, but saving institutions. Until this is done, no great gathering to God will take place, however many novelty-hunting hearers may rush excitedly to Abbey or to Hall.

To call crowds together, to discuss before them the relative worth of salvation by faith alone ; or salvation by the merits of their works, is worse than a waste of time. It is a mockery. What person in a gathering of thousands of supposed working men could be suspected of being in danger of ruin from building his hopes of salvation on his merits ? Do men now believe in this Protestant country, that they do so many good works that they have more than enough to merit heaven ? Is not the universal lamentation entirely the other way ? that religion is so separated from work, that religion has become words, and work is full of sin. Is not the feeling everywhere that from the divorce of religion, and the world, we have a sour religion, and a bad world ? Selfishness, and not the love of God, rules in most of our operations. We rush on, inspired by the ambition of becoming rich, great, and powerful ; but are slow to labour to become childlike, just, and good ? The operative classes, who do not trouble themselves as others do to keep up appearances, make little pretension to religion of any kind, but practice the grossest vices. To call them together to induce them not to think of meriting heaven by their works, is to dream we are yet in the Romish controversy. It is to be two hundred years be-

hind the time. For Luther, it was a necessity to shew the folly of dependence for salvation on the puerile works of a drivelling superstition, but for us the great want of the time is to pray men to be virtuous for the love of Christ; to prepare for heaven, the land of love and right, by becoming righteous here. It is to urge men from love to the Saviour to fly from sin. The men who even neglect public worship altogether, the drunkards, the gamblers, the swearers, the adulterers, who are supposed to be the parties addressed at Exeter Hall, surely cannot be thought to be presuming upon their good works. How strange then that an excellent clergyman like the Rev. Baptist Noel should be so accustomed to the faith-alone routine, that the burden of his sermon should be to persuade such characters not to trust for heaven to the merit of their works. First, get them to work at all, then guard them against self-righteousness. First, get them to learn the soul-murder which sin induces, and beseech them to fly from that, and the time may come, but it is yet far off, when it will be needed to guard them from exalted ideas of their own merits. The crying present want is, to induce men to take religion to the counting-house, the workshop, the business of society, and into every man's work; from the immense manufactory, to the humblest shed; from the most fashionable emporium, to the lowliest shop; from the monarch's palace, to the cottage, the cellar, and the garret of the poorest artizans; to seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, in confiding faith that all things will be added unto us (Matt. vi. 33). To urge this upon mankind, and to shew how it may be done; to lead men to Him, who can kindle a living conviction, a confiding faith in the soul of this all-important truth is the grand work of the age. This alone will draw men back to God; and by this alone will "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."—Rev. xi. 15.

A faith NOT saving then is a faith not grounded in love; "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing."—1 Cor. xiii. 2. Indeed, such a faith is in reality no faith at all. "Where love is not, faith is not, for it is love that believeth" (ver. 7). The Lord Jesus said to the woman alluded to in our text, "Thy faith hath saved thee;" but He had previously said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; FOR SHE LOVED MUCH."—Luke vii. 47. The faith of a person who loves God, and goodness, saves; but where love is lacking, there is no salvation. The Lord did not say in general terms, "Faith hath saved thee; but

THY faith hath saved thee." When the Lord was appealed to by the blind men to heal them, He asked, "What WILL ye that I should do unto you?" and when He describes the reason of the destruction of the impenitent, He does so in the pathetic and impressive words: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Those who were healed WILLED to be healed. Those who were unsaved, WOULD not be saved. It is the state of the WILL, which determines man's final lot. The whole man becomes in the end what the WILL really is. The ruling passion becomes strong in death, and stronger in eternity.

A faith NOT saving, is a faith which does not subdue sin, and produce a righteous life. Such a faith, is a dead faith, as the apostle James says; and a dead faith certainly cannot produce a living Christian. The faith which is often proclaimed by exciting preachers, is simply the blind persuasion that the believers of it are saved; saved, as they often cry out, just then. Two terrible delusions are set forth with frantic violence, and passionate appeals to fear and hope. First, the unchangeable God of love is described with all the malignant attributes which befit an evil spirit. The hell, which it is said he kindles, is described with all the horrible appendages which a wild imagination in the preacher can invent. And, when his weak auditory, generally the youthful part of his audience, have been made frantic with terror, the preacher then takes it upon him to assure them that if they will believe that Christ has died to save them, they will be saved in a moment. And this is salvation by faith alone. But this is no salvation from sin, it is a salvation from fancy. Hence, when the excitement is over, and the so-called saved ones exhibit tempers as evil, selfishness as grasping, and sometimes grosser weaknesses as great as before their supposed salvation, they are told that these sins inhere in their flesh, and they will be troubled with them until they put off the body; but they are saved nevertheless. One reverend gentleman, addressing his flock at the beginning of the present year, tells them they are not to work for salvation, nor work from salvation, for their salvation is kept safe for them in heaven; they cannot lose it nor destroy it. Persons led by such deluded, and deluding dreamers are often full of spiritual self-conceit, often not more correct in their dealings than the merest worldling, and most bitter towards those who think differently from themselves. Oh! for words of thunder to echo among such vain deluders the

divine lessons of our Lord and His apostles "God is love" (1 John iv. 16); "He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning" (James i. 17). Condemnation is not from Him, but from sin, and selfishness is the very soul of it.

You say you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so you are saved, for salvation is by believing only. But have you indeed believed in Jesus Christ? Do you believe that selfishness must be renounced to follow Him? "If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross, and follow me."—Matt. xvi. 24. Do you believe Him, when He says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments?" Do you believe Him, when He says, the great commandment of the law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" and the second is alike unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Do you believe Him, when He says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me?"—John xiv. 21. Do you believe Him, when He says, "Ye are my friends, if ye DO whatsoever I command you?"—John xv. 14. Do you believe Him, when He says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love?"

Can you believe the Lord Jesus, whose gospel is full of these assurances, and yet believe that keeping the commandments, and working, and doing, have no concern in salvation? Your faith is not in Him, but in fancies of your own.

You say that keeping the commandments is a heavy burden which you cannot bear. Alas! it is NOT KEEPING them that makes all the burdens in the world. The Lord Jesus says truly, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—Matt. xi. 30. John assures us that "His commandments are not grievous."—1 John v. 3. And whoever felt them so when he was in earnest to be saved?

Depend upon it, my beloved friend, unless you actually repent, actually labour against your sins, and actually obey His laws from love to Him, your supposed faith is vain, for you He has died in vain; you are yet in your sins. He died to give you power to die to sin, and live to righteousness. Are you dead to sin? Are you dying daily as the apostle did?

Suppose two farmers had land given them by a landowner to cultivate. One, believing in the goodness of God, and the excellence of the divine laws, applied himself each season to his work, and reaped the result in a bountiful harvest. The autumn

came, his barns were full, and his heart was filled with gratitude and love, for the divine gifts which were stored around him. Here is an illustration of faith working from love. The other farmer hunts, drinks, and neglects his business, until September reveals scanty fields, weeds instead of corn, want instead of plenty. Of what avail would be his prayers or professions then? The time for work had gone by. His faith then would be *faith alone*.

O talk not of the thief upon the cross! You know nothing of his life. But He who did know, and who judges each man according to his works, adjudged him to heaven. The heart and life of this man must have been, in the main, right, though like Peter, he may have failed in one trial; and, like Peter, deeply repented. Look to the Saviour, the centre figure on those crosses, and not to the thief; and He says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that DOETH the will of my Father who is in heaven."

You say you are saved by faith alone. Has it saved you from illwill, contentiousness, uncharitableness, from impulses to sin, or even practices which are inconsistent with the blessed laws of heaven? How can you be saved from sin, when you still have sin in you, and are daily sinning? How is a person saved from a disease, while he is yet suffering from the disease? Would you deem it common sense for any one to tell you, suffering from fever, that you were in no danger, because Galen many centuries ago laid down the means of curing fever? You say Christ took away your sins on the cross. And yet you have them. O my brother, put away this jargon: Christ redeemed the world from the power of hell, and put away sin from His own human nature. "He abolished the enmity in His flesh," (Eph. ii. 15; but He must abolish it in yours before you are saved. "Christ in you is the hope of glory" (Col. i. 29). Think not that your evils cannot be overcome, but seek them out sincerely. Pray to the Lord Jesus for power. He who overcame all hell will overcome all evil in you. Have faith in Him. Believe truly in His promises, in His might, and in His kingdom: "His name was called Jesus, for He should SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."—Matt i. 21. And by little and little, as fast as the laws of the wondrous nature He has given you will permit, He will redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you unto Himself as a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Believe from your heart on Him, and you will know from His works in you, that He is truly "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace."

SERMON XXIX.

JESUS, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

“Fear not; I am the First and the Last.”—Rev. i. 17.

SUCH were the sublime words said to the trembling and prostrate apostle. Astonished and overwhelmed by the wondrous vision which broke upon his spirit's opened sight, especially by the divine majesty of the Saviour's presence, he fell at His feet as one dead, when the adorable One put His right hand upon him, and said, “Fear not; I am the First and the Last.”

Cheering words are these. John fully trusted them, and stood erect and peaceful. We shall have perfect peace only when we can trust them too. “Fear not, O fear not, I am the First and the Last.” They fall upon the troubled anguished heart like drops of fragrant dew. The soul, unblest by its Saviour, is a complete focus of fears. We fear the loss of fortune, we fear the loss of fame, we fear the loss of friends, we fear the loss of health, we fear the approach of death, and we fear everlasting ruin. How blessed is it to be freed from them all, by the divine assurance, which disperses every anxiety, “Fear not; I am the First and the Last.” O write these words upon our hearts, adorable Redeemer!

But let us inquire into the full import of these divine expressions. There must have been a First, and that First must have been the Eternal. The First must be underived, for any being derived from another cannot be the First; that from which it was derived must have existed before it. The First can only be the name of the Eternal Love, from which all things have sprung, the Father. Everything below this is referrible to something prior. The outward universe is manifestly the ever-varying product of the universe of causes, laws, and powers within it. These powers, laws, and causes within, are the results of the divine power which impels and sustains them. The divine power flows

from the divine love and wisdom, for wisdom without love would be motionless, and love without wisdom, blind. Power, therefore, is an effect of the principles from which it flows, and the divine power is simply the infinite energy of the divine love and wisdom, the love which desires to bless, and the infinite wisdom which prescribes the means. The divine intelligence flows from the divine love, the way comes from the will, the light from the fire. The fire of the Divine Love is the First, the eternal source of all things. GOD IS LOVE. The Divine Love in the Word is called "The Father," because it is the spring whence all the attributes of God proceed, and from which all divine operations in heaven and earth exist. Hence, those who erroneously suppose the Divine Trinity to consist of three divine persons, say the Father is the first person, and the Son is the second, and the Holy Ghost the last person in the Trinity. But here the Lord Jesus declares Himself to be the First, plainly asserting that He is the Father as well as the Son. "I am the First:" and He is also the Last, and, certainly, the first and the last must include the second. In the very nature of things the First must be the Eternal God. Hence, Jehovah in the Old Testament makes use of the very declaration of our Saviour here. "Thus saith the Lord (Jehovah) the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts; I am the First, and I am the Last; and beside me there is no God."—Isa. xlv. 6. Again: "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called: I am He; I am the First, I also am the Last." There cannot be two Firsts. If there were two equal there would be no First. The First can only be one, and must be eternal. If nothing had preceded it, nothing would be the First. If some other being or person had gone before it, that other would be the First. The First, then, means the Eternal One, and therefore it is conjoined in the text quoted above, with the declaration, "Beside me there is no God." But the Lord Jesus says "He is the First." How then can we hesitate to acknowledge that He and Jehovah are one? If we seek to ascend in thought those links in the chain of being which evidently exist between this outer world and its Creator, we shall come to the same conclusion. The world of nature is, undoubtedly, the outside of the universe. It consists, manifestly, of dead matter, everywhere subject to laws which operate in all its changes, all its movements. It is the world of effects; these laws are the immediate causes. But laws, themselves, are only the effects of principles from which they proceed. Human laws which are wise and good, flow from the goodness and wisdom of those who enact them. The laws of the universe are perfect. They ac-

accomplish the object intended with the nicest accuracy. They are arranged with unerring wisdom. But not only is the wisdom apparent, so as to display the infinite understanding from which they have originated, but the benevolent purpose of every one is equally apparent. They not only give their innumerable blessings, but give them freely, hoping for nothing again. The end of ends in them is to produce and perfect immortal human beings, who shall be prepared, in this world, to be fully happy in their everlasting home. A countless number of worlds, with a constantly increasing multitude of inhabitants on them, to add for ever to the societies of the blessed, this is, undoubtedly, the great end visible in an enlarged view of the universe. And this end is infinitely benevolent. It implies love unutterable and boundless. Beyond this we cannot go. This is the First. By another way, we have come to the same conclusion, "God is Love." Beyond the Divine Love we cannot go. Here, we can only say, "It is." Hence, the word Jehovah signifies "He who is." And when He sent Moses to the Israelites, He commanded him to say, "I am" hath sent me unto you. Time is nothing to His supreme existence. One eternal now is before Him. He ever has been the "I am." He always will be. The Lord Jesus adopted the same style, when He said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was I am."—John viii. 58. Here, again, establishing His identity with Jehovah.

We have analogy to assist us here, as in all other things; Dr. Young wisely styles "analogy, man's surest guide below." When we see a well-arranged and commodious mansion rise before us, and we inquire how it came there, we shall probably discover that it was erected by the skill of some builder, according to the plan of some architect. But we shall not stop here. We feel there must have been something beyond building skill, beyond architectural plan. And this we find in the desire or love of the owner of the house that he might have a comfortable habitation, and thence be of use to mankind. This love is the first principle of operation, the result is the last, but the love pervades and makes itself felt in the whole.

And this prepares us to consider what is involved in the latter part of the announcement in our text, "I am the First and the Last." What is meant by the Last?

In Isaiah xli. 4, similar terms are used, but with a certain variation. Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? "I the Lord (Jehovah), the First, and with the Last; I am He." Here Jehovah is stated to be *with* the Last; but in our other quotations, in which redemption is plainly

treated of, He is called the Last; and in our text the Lord Jesus declares Himself to be "the Last." So that, in redemption He was *with* the Last, because He Himself became "the Last."

But what is implied in His becoming the Last? We have seen that the Eternal One is, and must ever have been, the First. But we wish to see further, that He must have been an Infinite Man, in first principles. What are the first principles of true manhood? Are they not goodness and intelligence? Do we not consider a person truly a man in proportion as he is truly good and truly wise? Do we not say of one who has only animal appetites, and no regard for truth, for virtue, and real manly feelings, "He is no man?" The Scriptures speak in this style. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a MAN, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it."—Jer. v. 1. A man is one who executeth judgment, who does the truth he already possesses, and seeks for more. He is no man who sluggishly foregoes all inquiry, all examination, and resigns the use of reason, as a slave, at the imperious dictate of others. He is no man who seeks to trample on the rights of the innocent, to disregard the principles of justice, and to gratify only the cravings of passion or lust. He may be a wolf, a tiger, or a serpent, in a moral point of view, but no man.

The flippant being who wastes his whole time on himself and his dress, giving no thought to the nobler aspirations of the soul; the frivolous trifler, who is careless of all human progress, to whom it is matter of no concern whether justice or injustice, vice or virtue, triumphs in the world, who is heedless of everything save himself, his food, and his dress, is a vain creature, whom to call a man would be to desecrate the word. The more wise a person is the more a man he is. The more virtuous, upright, and truly loving he is, the more is he a man. Goodness and wisdom are the first principles of humanity; the human shape is only the last. When the inner principles have worked themselves out through all their ramifications to their extremes, they form the human shape. In that they terminate. It is their last. As men depart from truly human principles, and become more the creatures of appetite and passion, there is a certain coarseness and brutality written upon the features, giving an animal air and likeness to them. The fox-like mind gives an expression of cunning to the visage which painfully impresses the thoughtful observer, especially if not concealed by hypocrisy, and indicates the predominance of the sly brute over the man. A saintly,

manly mind, is only fitly expressed by an angel-like human form. Finite goodness and wisdom make a finite man; they are his first principles. Infinite goodness and wisdom make the infinite man; they are His first principles. From them we have seen the universe has originated and is governed. From this cause it is that everything in the universe has relation to the human form. Everything in it corresponds to man, and resembles him. The higher it stands in the scale of creation the more is it like humanity. The higher domestic animals have not only an organization like that of the human body, but manifest a near approach to some of the human feelings. The lower we descend the scale of living beings, and the less complete is the human likeness seen, but still it exists, until the lowest sentient form of life are seen in the resemblance of the mollusca to a stomach. The world is full of human resemblances, which are often brought out by the poet and the thinker. Man is a little universe. The universe is a grand man. Now, whence is this fulness of humanity? Whence can it be, except from an infinitely human source? Say God is a Divine Man, and you have the key to the whole. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."—Rom. i. 20.

God, then, from eternity, was in first principles a Divine Man. If He should descend into last principles, how else could He appear but as a man? When He became visible in the world, appearing as our Saviour, it was as the Word made flesh. God in last principles. "God was manifest in the flesh."—1 Tim. iii. 16. He appeared before the eyes of men in a body like their own. To be with the last, He became the Last Himself, so that He could sustain His people directly from Himself. He could be the vine, and they the branches.

This truth, that the Lord would come into the world, and save it as a man, is the clear subject of prophecy. "A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—Isa. xxxii. 2. "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us)."—Isa. vii. 14. Of the Lord's Humanity it is said, "I have raised Him up in righteousness, and I will direct all His ways: He shall build my city, and He shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts. They shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying,

Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.—"Isa. xlv. 13—15. That God would hide Himself in redemption as He hides Himself in creation, is thus foretold. He is ever a God hiding Himself. We see His blessings everywhere, but we see not Him. He moves the whole glorious universe, to pour out of its exhaustless bosom continual bounties and innumerable mercies, but He remains unseen. We receive the gift, but the Giver remains veiled. It is not, then, out of God's ordinary path, but in close harmony with it, that, as a Saviour, He should be a "God hiding Himself." That the First should become the Last.

If Jehovah ever became a Saviour it must be thus. How could He come into the world except by becoming a man? And that He would come and be a Saviour is the great burden of prophecy. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you."—Isa. xxxv. 4. "For the Lord (Jehovah) is our judge, the Lord (Jehovah) is our lawgiver, the Lord (Jehovah) is our king; HE WILL SAVE US."—Isa. xxxiii. 22. "I, even I, am the Lord (Jehovah), and beside me THERE IS NO SAVIOUR."—Isa. xliii. 11. "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME."—Isa. xlv. 21. These passages surely declare that Jehovah would be the Saviour, and for that purpose would come into the world. But how could He come into the world except by clothing Himself with our nature, like a man in the world? And this only from a mother. For if He had had a human father as well as a human mother, He would have been entirely human. For man receives the germ of his inner spiritual organization from his father, and of the outer organization, or clothing of the inner, from his mother. Had the Lord, therefore, had a human father as well as a human mother, it would simply have been another man who was born, not Jehovah, who had become our Saviour, not God, who was manifest in the flesh. Such a Saviour would have been a mere teacher, not a Life-Giver. But Jesus came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly (John x. 10). He came to impart new power to humanity, sunk, degraded, and depraved. He came to bind humanity to Himself, that He might subdue its sins, regenerate, and save it. Hence, He took our nature upon Himself that He might sanctify it there, and through His own sanctified and glorified Humanity, as "By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."—

Heb. x. 20; He might pour His Holy Spirit to enlighten, elevate, and bless ours. "For their sakes," He said, "I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19. This entry of God into the externals of human nature, and thus becoming the Last as well as the First, is the greatest of all spiritual facts. It is the only foundation of the regeneration of the world. In Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily, and ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (Col. ii. 9, 10).

O that we could embrace this truth in all its breadth, and in all its divine force. For by Jehovah the First becoming also the Last, He conquered hell for us (Luke i. 71; x. 18, 19). He brought the Eternal Father fully to view (John i. 18; xiv. 9); and by glorifying His Last principles so that His Human became also Divine, He can save to the uttermost. "All power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth."—Matt. xxviii. 18.

Such are some of those weighty truths which are intimated to us in the divine words, "I am the First and the Last."

It is, however, remarkable, that combining our text with the eighth verse, our Lord says virtually three times over in this chapter, that He is the First and the last.

For there it is written, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." The Alpha and Omega, which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, in which this book of the Revelations was written, imply plainly that He is First and Last in one respect; the Beginning and the Ending import the same thing, while the plain statement of our text declares it again a third time. And we see the reason of this when we reflect that there are three great essentials of Deity, the Divine Love, the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Power. The threefold declaration therefore is given to assure us that the Lord Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of all Divine Love, and of everything in us derived from the Divine Love. From the first impulse of life which heaves the infantile breast, to the last deep, ardent glow of adoring affection, all is from Him. So with the Divine Truth. There is not a ray of heavenly light, but He is the Beginning of it. He is "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."—John i. 9. The first gentle counsels which drop from a mother's lips, or sweet caution which gleams from her eye, are from Him, and all the lessons of wisdom which are attained through life, and all of which if truly learned, point to Him. He is the Beginning and Ending of them all. And, it is the same with the Divine

Power. It is all His. From the feeblest effort that forms the tiniest bud, to the sublime laws which sustain heaven and earth, the First and the Last of it is from Him. The whole Trinity of incommunicable attributes is in Him. He is the possessor of them all. He, is, and Was, and is to come, the Almighty. He is no new Deity or half Deity. He was with the prophets, the spirit of Christ in them did testify (1 Pet. i. 11). He it is who is to come. He will be with us in death, and in eternity. Be thou faithful unto death, he said, and I will give thee the crown of eternal life. We shall find Him in the Sun of heaven, where He reigns, King of kings, and Lord of lords. And in the countless ages of eternity He will still be to all the innumerable multitudes of the happy, HE WHO IS TO COME, for He is the Almighty.

We may now perhaps be enabled to enter into the divine exhortation of our text,—Fear not, and see the admirable character of the reason assigned, “I am the First and the Last.”

The natural man, when he views God as he conceives Him out of Christ, paints Him after the fashion of his own revengeful nature, and armed with Omnipotent power. He shudders before a Being nothing can escape, and is conscious of having deserved His condemnation. He has frequently recurring misgivings and terror, which cause heart-sickness and pain when death and judgment loom before him. And so long as God is thought of out of Christ, and not as God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, such inward trepidation must remain. To such then, these words when truly apprehended, will come like heavenly music, “Fear not, I am the First and the Last.”

The Lord Jesus was embodied tenderness and love. Men often tremble before the unknown God, they make for themselves, out of Christ. But the Lord Jesus Himself is always felt to be the sinner's Friend, and the universal Friend. His whole life on earth was spent in doing and suffering what the wants of His creatures required. There was no sorrow that was brought before Him, but He felt for and removed it. No sufferers in body or in mind with which He did not sympathize, and did not comfort. When His disciples were toiling in the dark night upon the sea, He came and said, It is I, be not afraid. All who know Him feel that He cares for them, and wills to succour and to save them. Those at the present day who are very unhappy at the supposed inflexibility of the awful Father, always rely on the Son's willingness to plead for them. He died for us, say they, He requires no sacrifice to propitiate Him, but the sacrifice of our sins. We will go to Him, and ask Him to be our

Advocate with the First Divine Person that we may be pardoned. Let such trembling, weak ones, hear His divine assurance, Fear not, "I am the First and the Last." There is no other whom you need fear, "I am the First." "Come unto me, all ye who are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." By the Word in last principles, the Word made flesh, we know really the character of the Word in first principles, the Word which was with God, and which God was. We have learned from Him, and we are persuaded, that if we go to Him in our blindness He will open our eyes: if we go to Him in our sins, but mourning and repentant, He will say, "Neither do I condemn thee; Go and sin no more:" if we go to Him with our hands withered, He will strengthen our hands for all that is good. In our spirit's sicknesses He will heal us; in our spiritual death even, He will, as He did Lazarus, raise us again. Fear not, His whole life and Gospel say to us, "I am the First and the Last."

The Lord says, "Fear not." He knew we had many fears. We will notice three classes of them which remain frequently lingering with those who admit doctrinally that the "Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." First, they have fears for their future in this life. Secondly, they have fears that they will not succeed in subduing their evils, and preparing for heaven. And thirdly, they fear death; some the judgment to which it leads, and some the apprehended pain of dying.

Those who fear for their future in this life; who fear lest they should suffer loss of health or comfort; lest they should become poor, and despised, are often harassed with anxieties, when they witness the changing circumstances of all around. A friend is prostrated to-day, who yesterday was in perfect health. A neighbour is to-day a bankrupt by some commercial change, who lately was considered opulent; and felt himself to be rich. Accidents occur which make the most alarming changes. Nor do these vicissitudes seem to be guided by a just regard to moral worth. The wicked prosper, and often attain titles and dignities denied to worthier men. Riches are often possessed by the unworthy, while the virtuous are straitened in their circumstances. All these appearances induce fears, and some are bitterly distressed by anxious cares of this character. They look at the Lord as ruling all things in first principles, and on a grand scale, but do not understand how He can attend to the small events of daily life. And they think if He did, His blessings would not be so unequally dealt out. They admit the

Lord to be the First, but they forget His assurance that He is also the Last.

This is however the truth. His exhortation is to all such, Fear not, "I am the First and the Last." Not a hair of your head falls to the ground, but your heavenly Father knoweth it. All these changes of life are under His providential care, and are permitted or provided only as He sees they can be made conducive to the real good of every individual. A Providence which cared for great things, and not for small, would be no Providence at all. No whole can exist which is not composed of parts. Every mountain is made of atoms, every shower of drops. He who provides soil, and rain, and wind, and sunshine for the lily, so that they may grow with vigour, and be clothed with beauty, will much more care for you. You feel you do not know the future, you have it not in possession, but it is in good hands. Trust in Him. Joseph in the pit was forlorn enough, but He was as much the object of divine attention and care as when exalted to rule all Egypt. The pit was the way to the glory which followed. We cannot see the Providence of the Lord in the face, but we may see it in its back parts. Who is there of us on looking back, cannot discern the hand of Providence which has brought us thus far. We have had sorrows no doubt, but the winter's frost is as salutary in preparing the soil, as the summer's sun. The blows which break the clods are rough, but useful. The time I hope has been when we have blessed the divine Mercy for our sorrows, and again will it yet more fully come. Our gratitude for our joys will in eternity be heightened by the remembrance, that through much tribulation have our robes been washed, and made white by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. vii. 14).

We observe the wicked bedecked with titles, and dignities; we see them rolling in wealth, and we cannot but think if they had their deserts, a very different lot would be theirs. But we should remember, that the Divine Providence desires to make the selfish useful. Those who would not labour from disinterested love for the public good, will often toil for a title. A few sounding words are a cheap mode of inducing the inwardly idle to be actively useful, the inwardly malignant to defend a nation, and advance its progress. To gather wealth, even the most selfish must circulate it. The most tenacious lover of money can only hold it for a short time; and he who hoards, is in the long run, found to have been gathering capital by which great undertakings can be brought to a successful issue. In the end it will be found that seeming evil will have been over-

ruled to real good. Let us be assured that Infinite Love and Wisdom are presiding over each event with reference to the evil, even to lead them if possible to good, by giving them to see that an abundance of their fancied goods, affords no heartfelt peace or pleasure; and to the sincere seeker of a heavenly state, every circumstance and every event, however small, is under the loving guardianship of the Saviour, who said, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last."

Others have fears of a more interior kind. They find their evils are numerous and active. They once thought they had subdued many which have again shewn themselves. Some against which they have long striven, yet continue to exist and to harass them. They fear sometimes lest they may have been deceiving themselves, with ideas of progress which have not been real. They fear that their nature is so radically corrupt, that it is an exception to the general rule. They are peculiar, they are worse than others, and the Lord though He looks after the great features of their spiritual life, does not descend to their individual evils. Or at times, they think He overlooks them altogether; He has seemed to notice them before, but He has gone a far journey.

"I would, but cannot rest
In God's most holy will;
I know what he appoints is best,
Yet murmur at it still,

"But if indeed, I would,
Though nothing I can do;
Yet the desire is something good,
For which my praise is due.

"Then crown, O Lord, at length
The work thou hast begun;
And, with a will, afford me strength,
In all thy ways to run.

They feel beset before and behind. They are like the Israelites when the Red Sea was before, and Pharaoh's host behind. There was no way of escape. Let them, like the Israelites, cry unto the Lord, and hope and wait. The Sea will open once again, and a sure deliverance will come. Moses said unto the people, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."—Ex. xiv. 13, 14. Be assured, my dear hearers, this will also be, your case. You do not see your way. Stand still, then. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace. The distress you feel, the straitness you have, the horror you experience, all betoken a crisis. Be faithful,

and trustful, now, and "the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." The evils which harass you now, will soon be rejected and subdued. They will speedily trouble you no more. They pain you severely now. That is a good sign. Once you were not troubled upon the subject. The more you loathe them, and dread their influence, the more you are being separated from them. While pain is felt in a wound, the powers of healing are there. Mortification has no pain, but it is fatal. It is good for a man to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. To all such troubled hearts, Divine Mercy says, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last." For this purpose, I became the Last. None are too low for me to reach them: I am "the Last," as well as the First. You are infested, my child, by many evil spirits and evil influences. But I have conquered all hell, I will fight for you. I say to the wild waves of temptation, Thus far shall ye go and no further, and here shall your proud waves be stayed. "Fear not, I am the First and the Last." My hand shall lead thee, and my right hand shall hold thee up. The Divine Truth filled with the Divine Love shall strengthen and save thee.

Lastly. There are those who fear the coming of death. They are satisfied, Divine Mercy has been with them through life, and is watching over and caring for them now, but death has a mysterious awe about it; and nature shrinks at it, and they fear to think of death. The apostle gives us to understand that two of the ends for which the Lord passed through death Himself, were to put down the fear of hell which had infested the dying, and to deliver us from this fear.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."—Heb. ii. 14, 15.

This Lord who died, and rose again, to shew He was the conqueror of death is He who said, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last." He is "the Author and Finisher of our faith."—Heb. xii. 2. He gave us the earliest truth which led us to Himself, and He will be with us when we finish our course. He raised His own Humanity from the dead, in a glorified state, and He is the Resurrection and the Life for us. He provided for our comfortable reception into this world, be assured His angels will have charge to receive us when we enter into the other. In His New Church too, He has given abundant information to

shew us the other world as a more real, more perfect, and more beautiful world than this : the spiritual body as a more living and substantial one, than this of matter.

Fear to die! fear to rise to a higher life! O no, let us live for it, and look to it as the end of our journey. We have to keep watch and ward in the outskirts of our Heavenly Father's domains. To die, is to be brought home to His palace. We have to bow our heads as we enter at the gate, but, soon we shall raise them again at the wondrous beauty of the better land. Sweet angel voices, soft with the music of love, will welcome us. We shall awake from a sweet sleep, into sweet company. All our powers enhanced; our bodily weaknesses and imperfections left behind. "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The Lord guards the passage of the dying. His Holy Spirit draws them towards Himself. No power can stay them, or endanger them, unless their own evils repel them from the abodes of peace. To all who love goodness and truth for their own sakes the Lord says, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last." My power is that of Infinite Love and Wisdom, the first principles of all things, and it extends to the last, the lowest, and the least of all things, embosoming, and protecting all.

*"Shudder not to pass the stream;
Venture all thy care on Him;
Not one object of His care
Ever suffered shipwreck there."*

Others fear the pain supposed to be felt in the act of dying. They love the Lord. They love His kingdom, and they humbly repose on His mercy, but the pain of death is unpleasant to contemplate. Originally death had no pain. Men passed away without disease, as when they go to sleep. A very large number do so now. Pain arises from our imperfections. But we shall not suffer pain unless Divine Mercy sees we shall be better for it. And if He sees that a permission of pain will do us good, shall we repine or fear? The cup which my Heavenly Father gives, shall I not drink it? He will never permit us to endure more than we can bear. For the rest, let us leave ourselves in His hands. "Let Him do what seemeth Him good." Thus shall we be able to cast our care on Him, who, though He was the First, shewed how much He cared for us in becoming the Last, for our sakes. "Fear not," He says, and we will not fear. He is the First, and presides over all things. He is the Last, and encompasses all things. We will abide in Him; and His spirit

shall abide in us. And, then, wherever we go, or whatever we do, He will be with us, and where He is, there is peace and there is heaven.

And, finally, let us remark, how grateful we ought to be for this divine assurance, "Fear not." How happy it is to be freed from anxiety, care, and discouragement. How delightful to be freed from fear. The future is not in our hands, but it is in His who is the First and the Last. A child has no concern for the future, and no fear. It is satisfied and happy with the present. If the angels suffered anxious thoughts to intrude with their long future, how could peace reign amongst them? They are child-like, confiding, and loving. They attend perfectly to their duties, and have joy in the sunshine of divine Love and Wisdom. Let us rejoice in doing the Lord's commandments, and dismiss care. Let us strive to live as they live in heaven, and thus prepare for heaven. "Are not five sparrows sold for a farthing, and yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them? Fear not, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

And be not anxious as to the exact progress you have made in the regenerate life. That is known only to the Lord. Let us resist evil, and do good in all our operations. Let us not be elated with present joy; one fine day is not a summer; nor depressed by present sorrow; a rainy day in spring is not a winter. And even winters pass away. "Fear not; I am the First and the Last." This is the Saviour's assurance. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." No evils are too powerful for Him. He knows the best time when we can bear each trial, and the mode in which it will be most beneficial. Leave it with Him. He will then breathe a sweet peace over the soul. "Fear not; I am the First and the Last."

In the Saviour's hands we shall find death is not death, but higher life. Let us have no concern when or how the Lord, the Bridegroom, shall call us home; but only strive to be ready. Let our lamps be lighted with the flame of truth, and our vessels filled with the oil of love; and then, when the call is made, the Bridegroom cometh, we shall go forth to meet Him. Let us, in the meantime, rest on these divine words, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last."

There is something unspeakably sweet comes over the devout soul when we really feel that the Lord Jesus is indeed the First and the Last. He is so good and holy, yet so merciful, so tender and forgiving. We remember it was He who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and a sense of peaceful trust and

grateful love fills the mind. A thousand fears fly away at His blest name, and we are happy. A new morning has dawned upon us, and this glorious truth shines as Aurora's lovely star. "I," said Jesus Himself, "am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star."—Rev. xxii. 16.

All our former perplexities as to the Divine Trinity fly away when we have rationally accepted this gracious lesson. We have endeavoured, sincerely, to see how three distinct persons could be truly one God, and we could not. We have tried to worship all equally, but have feared this was not done when the Father was addressed to do everything only for the sake of the Son, praying thus directly to the Father, but rarely to the Son, and very seldom, indeed, to the Holy Spirit. We have anxiously asked, How can a Son be eternal; must the Father not have existed before Him; and if another existed before Him, how could He be from everlasting? These doubts and difficulties all fly from the mind, like the lingering shades of night, when we clearly see Jesus as the "First and the Last." We adore in Him the Father, who, for our sakes, assumed the Son. His Spirit, flowing from His glorified body, is the Holy Spirit. How clear, how simple, is this grand idea, and omnipotence is with our Saviour. Jesus is All in all (Col. iii. 11).

We see too, in this, the grand circle of all creation. The universe has all proceeded from the Divine Man; it all returns to Him. "By Him (the Word) were all things made; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."—John i. 3, 4, 10. But now, happily, we know Him. We see in Him all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9); and He it is who says to us, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last." No, fear falls away, but O how deeply we love! Perfect love casts out fear. The very idea of our Heavenly Father Himself having followed us to earth, and to earth in its worst state, to redeem us from sin and sorrow, draws us to Him with an unspeakable attraction. Shall we not love and follow Him who has done so much for us? Shall we not accept the safety He has placed within our reach? The help He has brought to us? Can we ever again stray from the sacred path of His commandments when He has done so much to restore us to life, and health, and happiness? Ah, no, we feel this is the great power to draw mankind from sin, and form them into one blessed family in the coming age. High over all is He who is at once the Father, the Saviour, and the Regenerator, in One Divine Person, the grand

centre, towards which all look and love. They learn from Him who stooped to save the lowest, from love, to labour for all, also from love to seek to raise all around them : to become followers of Him in work, in obedience, in gentleness, and in light. And if, at any time, we are weak and weary, to feel His gracious encouragement, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last." Thus will virtue once more go out from the Saviour's garment; and thus will "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER."

SERMON XXX.

THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—Rev. vii. 14.

THE study of the Book of Revelation is one of great interest. It is the last book of the Word, and, like all other last things, it contains the result of all that has gone before. In it the Lord is presented as the First and the Last. In it you have paradise brought again to view, as in the first part of the Word, but paradise with a city—the innocent happiness of early days, with the cultivation of all succeeding times. The struggles spiritually represented in the wars of Israel—the struggles of the soul and the Church against evil and error—are here reproduced, and are shewn to find their final end in the triumph of the Lamb. They end by the reduction of all conditions, states, and ages, to the government of Divine Love, Wisdom, and Order, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. The prophecies are represented in this book, for it is all prophetic; and the Lamb, which is constantly kept before us in its sublime representations, never allows us to forget the gospel of Him who taketh away the sins of the world. The expressive symbols, too, which fill this book will afford us the key to arrive at those divine correspondences by which the whole Word of God is given to men. As in true order everywhere the last contains the first and all the intermediates, the results are the effects of all which has gone before. Works always flow from principles, and contain them; so in this Divine Book all the great subjects of the Word are finally brought forward, and find their crowning exposition in this last portion of Holy Writ.

Another important lesson to be derived from the Book of

Revelation is the nearness, fulness, and grandeur of the spiritual world. To behold its scenes, St. John had to traverse no wide distances, to seek no remote spheres. His spirit's senses were opened. He was in the spirit, and then saw and heard. He found the spirit-world, though unseen, was near, and its inhabitants as real and more beautiful than the tenants of this outer world. We shall do well to attempt to realize the magnificent scene which the apostolic seer then beheld. "I saw," he says, "a great multitude, whom no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." The veil which hides the eternal world from view was for the time withdrawn. And there were seen the countless myriads of the redeemed—not formless nothings, but glorious as they were good—clothed with white robes, the emblems of their purity; with palms in their hands, the emblems of the victory which each one of that glorious company had won over self and sin. There stood an innumerable host of those already redeemed. And, their hearts glowing with love, poured out their song of gratitude, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." They feel, and they confess with adoring love, that God in Christ has saved. Unless the Divine had saved them by the Human, not one would have been there. God the Infinite, they worship, as the fountain of all redemption. But God, by His humanity, came nigh to them, and brought them nigh to Him. He is the everlasting Father and their Father; all their help and all their blessings are from Him. Again, then, and again, they exultingly adore, saying, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever." May this, my beloved hearers, when we arrive in eternity, be our feeling and our glorious song.

Let me now invite your attention to the question put to the apostle. It is of very interesting import. One of the elders came to the apostle, who was doubtless filled with admiration at the astonishing scene he beheld, and to lead him to more exact information, said to him, "What are these who are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These questions are of great significance, when we bear in mind that, under the names of the twelve tribes, of each of whom twelve thousand were sealed, are represented all who belonged to the Lord's true Church in the world. There are various degrees of goodness and truth in the Church. These are signified by the different tribes. All who are genuinely in any of these preserved and

protected from harm in those wondrous judgments in the spiritual world, which take place at the end of a dispensation of religion on earth, and prepare the way for a new one. It was an error which clung to many of the early Christians, and to which all Christians are too prone to suppose that none but those who belong to the true Church are saved. Many of those who shrink from and condemn individual selfishness have not the same vigilance against the selfishness of sect. Hence many of the early Christians imagined that only those who kept the Jewish law and were Christians besides could be saved, and this opinion led to much dispute about keeping the law and not keeping the law in that sense. Others, since their time, have imagined that salvation could not be found out of the pale of their respective Churches, even after those Churches had become very different from the Church of Christ. And we all need to be much upon our guard, lest we respect and approve persons, not because of the Christian virtues they possess, but because they belong to our denomination. And, on the other hand, we should even fly from the danger of approving of the worthless, if only they acknowledge the same name as we. We should form communities, band together, and work together, because only so can extensive good be done in the world. But we should never esteem a bad person because he belongs to us, nor despise a good one because he bears some other name. We should never let our kind feelings be circumscribed by party, but, on the contrary, look upon our party only as a means by which we can extend the government of goodness and truth, and be a blessing to mankind. We should work faithfully and earnestly with our section of the Lord's family, but honour all who are good and true to that which they believe right. Our Lord said, "Other sheep have I that are not of this fold, them also I must bring, so that there may be one fold and one shepherd. There is not only the true Church in the world, but, under every form of error, the Lord has a Church known to Him, consisting of those who love Him and love to do good to others: who can say with St. John, "By this we know that we have passed from death to life; because we love the brethren." These, in every communion, are nearer to the like-minded of other denominations than they are to the selfish and worthless of their own. These, then, when they are purified from their mistaken views, when their robes are fully washed, so that no spot of error remains upon them, stand before the throne as accepted and victorious ones in the sight of the Lamb. For this reason, then, the apostle was first shewn the twelve tribes,

and they were sealed. Of course you are aware that, literally, there had been no twelve tribes for nearly eight hundred years before the vision of St. John. Since Tiglath Pilezer carried away the ten tribes of Israel there had only been two. It was not, therefore, to the tribes themselves the scene alluded, but to the Church they represented. After then the Church itself is described as saved; then the great multitude which no man could number are described. They were from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. These were neither despised nor forgotten. They stood before the throne. The black and the white, the slave and the free, the polished Greek and the untutored barbarian, the patient Hindoo, the plodding Chinese, the roving Indian, and the graceful Persian—all who shunned evil as sin in the sight of God, and did justly to others so far as they knew it—these would be inwardly clothed in white, and have the palm of victory. Oh! how delightful it is to think of this glorious addition to the heaven of our Lord! And, while we rejoice to see His visible Church extending among men, we can also rejoice to think that, from the thousand millions of human beings who people this earth at one time, He is drafting a great multitude whom no man can number, and making them everlastingly happy in some of the many mansions which form our Heavenly Father's kingdom.

They are said to have white robes, because the dress of the soul is meant. The Lord is said to clothe Himself with light, as with a garment; the soul clothes itself with truth, as with a garment. Good surrounds itself with truth, as fire does with light. Truth adorns the soul as a heavenly garment. Truth protects us from the chilling blasts of sneering assaults. Let a person be sure that he is right, and when he is bitterly assailed he will wrap himself in this consciousness of having the truth on his side, and remain unshaken and invulnerable. Truths thus protecting the soul from danger, and adorning it with graces, are what is meant by the beautiful garments of which the prophet speaks: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."—Isa. lii. 1. It is not, however, knowledge as furnished to us that forms a heavenly garment; that is only the rough material. What we hear and read must be pondered over and turned on every side; we must then bring the varied lessons to bear upon one another. We must see their harmony, their coherence together, and their relation to other truths. Thus, by the activity of the intellect, we shall turn the separate

lines into spiritual cloth, which may afterwards form a dress. But it is only when we adapt the system of doctrine we have learned to our own requirements of heart, mind, and life, that it really becomes a dress for us. And when this is really done, it is wonderful to observe how much there is alike in the dress of every one earnest to be good. He may belong to those who profess to believe in God as three equal divine persons; but in his spiritual struggles he will be so habituated to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, and find help in Him, that He will really be the object of the affections and inner thought. The Unitarian may, in words, deny the proper divinity of the Lord Jesus; but when he looks above Him he finds nothing—no form, no object. He cannot make a Father out of air. The earnest seeker in his soul's sorrow goes to the Saviour, as his Helper, Mediator, and Friend; until, finding this glorious Being ever before him, he at length finds the great manifested God is only to be met with there. The humanity of the Lord is the mercy-seat—the propitiatory where the Father can alone be seen, alone be met. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me," He said; and this is practically realized by all who seek a real salvation, until everything inconsistent with this falls unheeded on the ear, however much it may be said or sung in creeds. So with the love and life of religion. Although one person may have been taught that those only will be saved who were ordained from all eternity to be so, another that faith only is the saving principle, and a third that they only can be saved who have had faith in a Church which thinks it has been blessed, not with apostolic principles, but apostolic succession. Yet those who are interiorly good, of these and all the other varied forms of religion, will seek to shun evil which would harm another in any way, will carefully endeavour to carry out the precepts of devotion, charity, and kindly feeling, will try to fulfil their duties most carefully in all their daily operations, and thus inwardly supply themselves with the white robes of pure and true heartfelt religion. The outer dress they wear before men, the profession they make, is greatly different; but the inner dress, the pure robe they wear in the sight of the Lord, is equally white and spotless in each.

These are the robes to which our Lord alluded when He said to the church of Philadelphia, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white robes that thou mayest be clothed."—Rev. iii. 18. For wanting such a robe he who had got already among the guests of the great king was rejected, as we read in Matt. xxii. 11, 12. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man

who had not on a wedding garment: and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."—Matt. xxii. 11, 12. Each person must have a robe, and it must be a wedding garment. They have no garments of celibacy in heaven. The truth of every one there is joined to love. There is no cold light, like that of winter. Everything there is conjoined. Charity and faith, love and wisdom, knowledge and affection, word and work. All heaven is full of the marriage principle, and the whole is united to the Lord, the grand husband. All who are invited there are welcomed to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 9). Of heaven it may be truly said, in the words of the prophet, "Thy land shall be married."—Isa. lxii. 4. Hence, then, the robe in which the soul must be clothed must be a wedding garment. And each one must have his own robe. That religion only which a man has adapted to himself, and made his own, will be serviceable to his everlasting state. And here allow me to notice the strange and unscriptural error of those who maintain that we are saved by the imputed merits of the Lord Jesus; meaning His righteous acts being imputed to us, or set down to our account, as if His merits became our merits. It is said, "We are clothed in His righteousness," and thus only can appear in heaven. The practical effect of this is as sad as its statement is unscriptural and destitute of reason. Just as much right have we to pretend that the merit of creation may be attributed to us, as the merit of redemption. The Lord's works are all those of one infinitely excellent, and can none of them be assigned to any other. "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another."

The robe of the Lord Jesus can never be worn by finite mortals. "On His thigh and on His vesture is a name written, King of kings, Lord of lords."—Rev. xix. 16. What can man have to do with that robe? Besides, how strange it is to imagine that God, the allwise, can deceive Himself, by supposing and accounting men pure, because they are wrapped up and covered with the purity of the Saviour, although altogether impure. Can the Judge of all the earth account man other than he is? Surely not. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord."—Prov. xvii. 15. Shall we, then, charge Him with this very proceeding which makes men an abomination in His sight? Yet the whole doctrine of imputed righteousness, and imputed sin, does this. The Lord imparts righteousness to us, and what we receive is imputed. That becomes ours though it descended

from Him. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17. The righteousness we embrace with the heart, and make our own by so doing, this really imparts a character of purity and heavenly fitness to us, and this the Lord accounts ours. "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for *our good always*, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall BE OUR righteousness, if we OBSERVE TO DO all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us."—Deut. vi. 24, 25.

The doctrine of imputed righteousness has been one of the most fearful plagues of the church. In the vast number who have too readily grasped at it, it has made many entirely indifferent to real religion. The struggles which practical regeneration entails against harsh tempers, unjust dealings, selfish aggrandizement, impure statements and acts, have to them been nullified. What use could there be in these battles against self and sin, when they would be justified at last, however impure, simply by believing in the righteousness, and being clothed in the merits, of the Redeemer? Why trouble themselves to attain purity of heart when all their filthiness would be covered by the Saviour's holiness? By this delusive fancy the power of religion, the only regenerating power in the world, has been diverted and set aside, and men have been left a prey to all those passions and impurities which only religion can conquer. Hence the world is practically heathen, though nominally Christian. Few, indeed, are they who dethrone the idols of selfishness, worldliness, and wickedness, and really seek to live from the principles of innocence, justice, truth, and order, which reign in heaven, and which alone can make us heavenly. Let us, then, my beloved brethren, not dream of purloining the grand robe of the Lord Jesus, infinitely spotless and of infinite merit, but let us obtain meekness, robes suited to our own states, and which may become whiter and purer as we rise to greater purity by His power; for "the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."—Rev. xix. 8.

We must not fail to notice, that the robes mentioned in our text, are washed and made white. How clearly does this indicate that they signify principles which can be further purified, not the merits of the Lord Jesus, which are beyond all purification. These robes must be washed. They have many spots upon them, many failings, many errors and mistakes, and not a few of graver frailties. But as we steadily persevere and receive new outpourings of divine influence from the Holy Spirit, our spots are removed, and our robes become whiter.

Sometime ago, as I visited an aged lady friend, not far from the end of her pilgrimage on earth, she remarked that she had received much comfort in a dream the previous night, for our dreams have their significance, if we learn them rightly, as well as our wakeful hours. She said "She had seen herself in dream represented as young again, and dressed in a beautiful white robe. Here and there, however, she saw there were spots upon it. And I took it as a token," she said, "that my spirit was indeed clothed in white, but there were spots which yet required removal." So may it be with us. Our dress may be heavenly, yet require washing. Naaman dipped seven times in Jordan before his flesh came again like that of a little child. And so will it be with us. We must ever yearn for greater purity. Again and again must the living truth of the great Saviour pervade and purify us, until we have come up to the standard of heaven's own whiteness.

The robes are said to be "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." And not uncommonly do we find persons employing this, and other similar phrases in the Scriptures, as if the outward material blood shed upon Calvary was meant; a gross idea, which is not at all intended by the Word. The Lord's flesh and blood are often spoken of as imparting spiritual life, before the Lord suffered in Calvary at all. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."—John vi. 53—56. The Jews had the same carnal idea of the Lord's flesh which many now have of His blood; and they said, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? But the Lord answered such mistakes once for all, by saying, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—John vi. 63. The flesh that is meat indeed is the Divine Goodness; the blood which is drink indeed is the Divine Truth. He who receives these is conjoined with the Lord, dwells in the Lord, and He in him. It is the living blood of the Divine Truth which purifies the soul, not the dead blood which was removed by the soldier's spear. Hence, we are sometimes said to be sanctified through truth, sometimes by blood. "Sanctify them through the truth; thy Word is truth."—John xvii. 17. "Now ye are clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you."—John xv. 3. And here, it is said, "they have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of

the Lamb." The spirit of the Lamb, the living, glowing influence which flows from Him, and penetrates and purifies the heart of the believer, this is the blood of the Lamb. How could the spirit's robes be washed in any other blood than the quickening word, the living wisdom, of the Lamb. Robes of any kind could never be made white by outward blood. In this respect, as in others, "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

Those who imagine the blood, in the text before us, to mean earthly blood, when asked how this could bring about our salvation, say it reconciled the Father to us. They are ever thinking of changing God, whereas Scripture always represents the operations of the Lord Jesus as changing us. Look on the words before us, "They have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb." There is nothing in Scripture like those wild words of Dr. Watts, before he knew better,—

"Sweet were the drops of Jesus' blood
Which calmed His frowning face;
And, sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
Have turned His wrath to grace."

There is no word in our text, or elsewhere in Scripture, of calming the frowning face of the Father, cooling His burning throne, or turning His wrath to grace. These terrible representations of the Most High are man's portraiture of the God of love, when he thinks Him such an one as himself. The truth is precisely the reverse. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. His blood is given to wash our robes, and make them white. We are to be changed from uncleanness to purity, from darkness to light: "from dead works to serve the living God."

O that persons would endeavour to realize what they read, so that they would delight in the language of truth and soberness, not to revel in phrases which have no meaning, and which draw men away to wild fantasies, like those deceptive lights which arise in morasses, and often lure travellers to their ruin. Let us, for an instant, observe what takes place when a man is saved, and we shall see what is meant by the blood that washes him, and makes him white. By some book, or preacher, or circumstance, he is brought to reflect on his previous life. He feels self-condemned, and fears for the future, unless he turns to his Saviour. Fear is followed by hope. The invitations of the Word comfort and attract him. He determines to live a new life. He applies to the Word to learn what is required of him; and when he learns his duty he comes again and again to learn how to do it. He prays to the Lord for His Spirit, His bless-

ing, and His help; and he finds these are given to him. He has sorrow for a time, and then joy comes. He becomes a soldier of Christ. He puts on His uniform. He marches in His army. As some truths unfold his faults to him others teach him how to overcome them. All truth leads him to the Lord Jesus as a loving, living Saviour. He labours, first, to remove all acts which are plainly wrong, and he does so with much fear and trembling. As he succeeds he acquires confidence; and as he knows the Lord better, and more of His ways, fear gives place to purer emotions, and at last to the full glow of heavenly love. He rejoices to find the path to heaven not so difficult and unpleasant as he used to suppose; but, on the contrary, he finds the Saviour's yoke is easy, and His burden light.

Now in all this it is manifest that Divine Truth has been the great instrument of washing the soul, first from its grosser sins, then from its mistaken views of the religious life and the divine character, and lastly, from all mistrust, and all those impurities of motive and interior feeling which constitute the more subtle specks which must be removed from the white robes of the Christian. This then is the blood of the Lamb. The divine wisdom which flows from the Lord Jesus Christ, and as we receive more abundantly of it in study, in prayer, and in practice, we rise to higher purity and to sublimer peace. We become daily more prepared for the bright assembly of the faithful, the pure and the wise.

"Lo, these are they, through sufferings dire,
Who came to worlds of light,
And in the Lamb's pure mystic blood
Have washed their robes so white."

But let us next enquire why the Divine Influence of the Lord is called the blood of the Lamb?

The Lamb is the emblem of innocence. And this name is indicative of the Divine Innocence which was manifest in the Lord's Humanity, and at length filled it. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." Divine Innocence is not a negative principle, meaning simply the absence of guilt. It is that inmost of every real heavenly principle which disposes to bless, hoping for nothing again. It is the principle that goes forth guilelessly to do good, that has no selfish aim, no idea of merit, no object but the happiness of others, that can work no ill to any, that disposes the soul inmost to find delight in the fulfilment of every duty. Such is innocence; such is the Lamb. And, therefore, the prophet says, "Send ye the Lamb to the

ruler of the land.”—Isa. xvi. 1. And the Lord Himself declared to His disciples, “Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.”—Luke x. 3. But while men can be lambs in a human and finite degree, He was the Lamb of God; that is, the Divine Innocence itself in human form. This innocence when it enters the heart, takes away the sins of the world. The very desire to injure another, or to claim riches, or rule for self only, fades away before the blessed Lamb, and we become lamb-like. The whole life of the Lord Jesus was the manifestation of the Lamb. He came to save a world which had neglected Him, He sought to heal, and to help all around Him. When railed at, He answered not again. A gentle spirit of love shone around Him, and He overcame evil with good. He was taunted, insulted, smitten, and He answered not again. He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He suffered with divine patience, still triumphing by love in death. Divine forgiveness, divine care for others, divine benevolence, flowed forth in every word and every look in His death, and in His resurrection He represented, embodied, and inaugurated the highest of all principles, then too high for the world to understand, too high for the Church to understand; for the Lamb has still been slain, while the lion has been worshipped in the Christian Church since its foundation; but the New Jerusalem will be the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Love filled with innocence divine, as embodied in the divine man, will reign over the coming age, and is alone worthy to reign. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

Such, then, is the Divine Innocence meant by the Lamb. The blood that purifies then is called the blood of the Lamb, because it means the wisdom that flows from the Divine Innocence of the Saviour. When this spirit of innocence and love is felt in the soul, it removes anger and hate, and all the causes of ill-will. It is often overlooked that the Lamb of God is not spoken of as having taken away, but as that which TAKETH away the sins of the world. It is now operative, removing from the hearts of all who admit it, everything harsh and unholy, everything unkind and ungentle, and introducing in their stead a whole heaven of love, and peace, and joy. It is not said, which taketh away the punishment of the world, but the sins of the world. When sins are removed, sorrows cease as a consequence. The blood then that saves is the blood of the Lamb.

Lastly, let us observe the assurance of the angel respecting

the tribulation the beatified company had passed through. "These are they who came out of much tribulation." We may conceive that allusion may be made in these words to the persecutions endured by converts in the early ages of Christianity, but whether that be so or not, the truly regenerate will always be those who come out of great tribulation.

Without the troubles incident to human life, there is no softening of the asperities of the soul; no reduction of selfishness. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Under one form or another every soul must have tribulation. It is the wintry frost which pulverizes the soul. It is the bitter taste which precedes the sweet juice of the ripe fruit. It is the dark shade which precedes the morning. The circumstances of the regenerate life itself entail great tribulation. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Can the real Christian forget the period in his spirit's history when he first became earnest respecting eternal things, when he became concerned at the unveilings of his inner nature to himself? Can he forget how dark all seemed around and all above him? How gloom and sorrow filled him with anxiety almost with despair? The misery which some endure under their convictions of sin is unspeakable. The heavens above seem brass, the earth iron. All things are cold, threatening, condemnatory. They are like the struggles in the rapids above the Niagara,—scarce a hope of escape remains. They almost wish to die, yet fear it. They are in great tribulation. They go, however, broken-hearted to the great Saviour, they agonize in prayer, and an answer of peace comes. The Israelites have come out of Egypt; they have passed the Red Sea. Their prison is broken open. The stormy clouds are dissolved. The Sun of Righteousness appears with healing in His wings. Brightness and glory come round about them. They walk on rejoicing; "Old things are passed away, all things are become new." "These are they who have come out of great tribulation."

Those who are not well instructed in the character and circumstances of the regenerate life, imagine this first struggle and triumph to be the whole work of God in the soul. It is, however, only the beginning. The entire change of the whole conscious man is not to be effected by one struggle.

"Nor will I dream the heart and life
Are in a moment clean;
But long and painful is the strife,
That must be felt within."

The Israelities sang their song of victory on the shore of the Red Sea which had buried their enemies. If, however, they imagined their labours were all over, and they were ready to enter the land of promise, we know how much they were mistaken. They soon came to the bitter waters of Marah. So during their forty years' travel and toil, what assaults they had to suffer! What punishments to receive! What expulsions and purifications from their camp to undergo. Until at length none of the first generation remained to enter the land of Canaan, but Joshua and Caleb. All these things are figures for us. We must be in alternate joy and sorrow. We must be tempted and tried. We must suffer assault after assault, from evils which at first we do not even suspect to exist within us. Sometimes these troubles are extremely severe and protracted; but they are necessary to bring out the new man to perfection, to train the soldier of Christ, and to expel the enemies of his own household. During these trials, it will be a subject for severe spiritual distress, often, that past times of joy and peace have gone: that the divine light seems no longer to shine on our dwelling. "Father, if it be Thy will, let this cup pass from me," was the language of the great Captain of our salvation, and it will at times be ours. But if we bravely bear and suffer, we shall surely have our intermissions of comfort and peace, and our final conquest will be certain. Again will it be said, "These are they who have come out of great tribulation." One cause of great tribulation is suggested by these blessed ones being no part of the twelve tribes, but a great multitude out of all nations, and tribes, and languages. They would have to change views which were dear to them, habits, and religious customs which have been woven with their very being, and their best affections. Those who have not gone through this ordeal, have no complete idea of its severity. Where the convert has been sincere and earnest in his previous opinions, the change is always accompanied by great tribulation. It seems at first as if the whole foundation of faith and hope is giving way. The soul is shaken as it were to its centre. Perhaps to the internal trial there is added, the pain arising from the reproaches of well-meaning and affectionate, but mistaken friends. There is the fear of going wrong, the struggle between truth and error, the change of outward and endeared habits, the breaking off from cherished friends and beloved relatives sometimes, all these things bring intense sorrow. Those who pass through them, come out of great tribulation. It is well no doubt that change should not be too easy, but those who encounter all its difficulties and embarrassments for conscience' sake are worthy

of all respect. The reception of truth, the blessing of the Lord, and the life of true religion will no doubt abundantly repay for all our sufferings. To have the robe made white, and the palm of victory, we would drink the cup of sorrow were it twice as bitter; but it will ever be the characteristic of the really faithful,—"they have come through much tribulation."

But, now, what is the result? Delivered from their imperfections and their sorrows, in complete human form, clothed in white robes, they serve the God of heaven. They have no unsatisfied wants. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Their every wish is blessed by its fulfilment. No sun of selfishness lights on them nor any of its passionate heat. The Lord is their sun, a sun which will never go down, and the days of their mourning are ended. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne, the very centre of heaven, and of all things there, shall feed them, and lead them to fountains of living water. They will be supplied with goodness and truth, goodness and all its joy and truth in all its freshness for ever. The living fountains of waters will now supply them with fresh advancement in heavenly wisdom, for the fountains of truth in heaven are all alive. They live from the love that is in them. They live too from their progressive character. Some have imagined that when we enter heaven all progress is over. We are made perfect in everything, and thenceforward are stereotyped; but it is not so. Such a heaven would not be a happy one. With nothing to learn, no advances to be made, all pleasure would cease. Dullness would cover it with universal gloom. Oh, no! heaven is the land of progress, life, happiness, and peaceful activity. Every thing lives, springs, and blesses there. The troubles of time are forgotten in the raptures they now enjoy.

"Once, indeed, like us below,
Pilgrims in this vale of tears,
Pain they felt and heavy woe,
Gloomy doubts, distressing fears;
But these days of weeping o'er,
Past this scene of toll and pain,
They shall feel distress no more,
Never, never, weep again."

When then we are enduring tribulation, let the glorious assurances of our text console us. Whatever be the sorrow, whether of an outward or inward kind, let us bear in mind it is the common necessary lot. Riches are fleeting, power is soon prostrated, health fails, misfortunes come, and come to all. Troubles of conscience arise, convictions of sin, harrassing temptations, wearing cares, all cause tribulation; but what then, we are supported by them, and purified by them. Angel friends

sympathize with us and succour us. The universal Saviour aids and delivers us if we go to Him, and then comes our triumphant release from time, and our reception among those who have gone before us out of great tribulation.

How marked a manifestation is our text of the erroneous view sometimes put forth to explain the appearance of angels to men. When one has been seen, it is said God made a body for the time being so that He might be visible, and when the interview is over the body is dissipated, and the angel has no form, as before. They are called men it is said, because while they are so clothed with a body they appear to be men. But can any one conceive that all the innumerable host was furnished each with a body for the purpose of being seen by the one apostle? This would indeed be a cumbrous contrivance. How simple it becomes, however, when we know that man is a spirit, and when his spiritual sight is opened, he beholds what before was unseen. Spirits and angels too are men in lighter bodies clad, for there are "celestial bodies," and when these celestial ones are seen, they appear in form and in apparel glorious in beauty like the blessed ones before us.

Again and again let us reiterate to ourselves that we must look for the blood of the Lamb to wash our robes, not to alter another divine person. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well."—Isa. i. 16, 17. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from iniquity, that thou mayest be saved."—Jer. iv. 14. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—Ps. li. 7. Such must be our prayer, and such the washing for which we must prepare ourselves. Nor should we look elsewhere but to our own hearts, thoughts, and lives, for the impurities which should be removed. Many admit themselves to be sinners in general phrase, but never own to any particular practical sin. Nothing in temper, nothing in habit, nothing in act can they see wrong, although every one else can see much to improve, and they can readily enough detect the shortcomings of others. Let us cast such delusions away. Let us be practically true, and cast our evils from us as our most hurtful foes, and thus shall we in due time be able with the apostle to say, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course: henceforward there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

But, oh! let us be guarded against any of the delusions which would make us neglect obtaining the real white robes which will fit us, and be ours. Let us not dream that we are all

right because our great Head is robed in righteousness divine. That can never be attributed to us. His merits must ever be His alone. We must be clothed with religion as we learn it, and love it. We must be conjoined with the Lord Jesus as branches in the vine, abide in Him and He in us, and then His holy influence, like divine blood, will constantly descend into us and purify us. Day by day shall we remove one impurity after another which His spirit gives us to see, and to feel; and our robes, acquiring the whiteness of truth and purity, will befit us to associate with those triumphant ones who before us have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

SERMON XXXI.

THE SIGN OF THE WOMAN IN HEAVEN.

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travelling in birth, and pained to be delivered."—Rev. xii. 1, 2.

THE vision thus related by St. John is of a very striking and wonderful character. It follows after a series of scenes which imply the end of the former church and state of society, and it is intended to represent the commencement of the New Church under the form of this glorious woman. To comprehend fully the divine lesson offered to our meditation, it will be well to notice three things; first, the manner in which visions are seen, secondly, the law in which the scenes beheld in visions are to be interpreted, and thirdly, the interpretation of the especial scene before us.

And firstly we would remark that visions are spiritual sights of that inner world with which we are always mentally connected, and by which we are constantly surrounded, but which is invisible except to the eyes of those whose spiritual eyes are for the time opened by permission of the Lord. Natural vision is natural sight, spiritual vision is spiritual sight. There might be several persons together, but in a case of true vision only one might see the objects which were plain to him, because his inner eyes were opened. This is often made clear to us by the instances of vision related in the Word. Daniel states this very clearly in his case. "And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves."—Dan. x. 7. Hence those who had visions were in ancient times styled seers. "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer."—1 Sam. ix. 9. Another appellation equally significant which is used in Scripture con-

cerning those who had these real spiritual sights is, "The man whose eyes are open." We have an instance of this in Balaam. "He took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open."—Num. xxiv. 3, 4. Vision according to the Scriptures is not fancy, but inward spiritual sight. It is a perception of that spirit-world into which we all enter after death, and with which we hold inner, invisible, but most real communion during life, a communion of thought and affection with such as are like-minded with ourselves. True vision is even represented in the sacred pages as a high and holy gift, and most important to the human race. Thus it is said in the days of Eli, "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision."—1 Sam. iii. 1. And it is written again, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."—Prov. xxix. 18. To assure us of the existence of the eternal world, and thus sustain our hope of heaven, to give us an insight into that inner world which is to this the world of causes, whence the influences descend which change and renew this outer world of human society; these are the great objects of vision, and where these are not maintained the people perish. The grand scenes which passed in succession before the spiritual eyes of John, were given to shew him, and through him every student of these wonderful visions, the state of the church as it would be in after days, and which we have seen to a great extent realized. "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."—Rev. iv. 1.

Let us endeavour to rise to the contemplation and comprehension of these wondrous scenes, that we may also know the things which shall be hereafter. To do this, however, effectually we must consider, secondly, the law by which the scenes beheld in vision are to be interpreted. That law is the law of correspondences. That very relationship of principles within, and outward forms which correspond to them, which we have often endeavoured in our discourses to shew, pervades all things in this world, and is the rule for obtaining the spiritual sense of the Word everywhere, is the law which reigns entirely in the spirit-world. There mind rules entirely, and thoughts and sentiments embody themselves in corresponding forms at once. Hence we obtain the true law for the interpretation of the visions, and another striking illustration of the universal character of the wonderful rule of correspondence. It exists in both worlds. It pervades nature, and it pervades spirit. In nature it comes out

slowly, in spirit it manifests itself rapidly. In the spirit-world, what is thought is seen in corresponding forms. He, therefore, who knows the correspondences can readily interpret the vision. Horses of fire, trees of life, golden cities, and the numerous symbols exhibited before him, are full of meaning and of wisdom. They unfold to the student those thoughts of God which are as much higher than our thoughts, as heaven is higher than the earth (Isa. lv. 9). Let us in the light of this law consider the scene presented before us. There is a woman clothed with the sun, crowned with stars, and having the moon under her feet.

In the previous chapter there is represented an examination of the state of Church, signified by measuring the temple of God, the altar and the worshippers (ver. 1). The Church's degradation is described by the holy city being trodden under foot of the Gentiles for forty and two months, or three years and a half. The two witnesses which prophesy in sackcloth twelve hundred and sixty days, again three years and a half, which are slain, but after three days and a half revive, are the two grand principles of love to God and love to man, which become feeble in a falling church, and at last are slain, but rise again in a new dispensation. The three and a half represent the completion of one dispensation, signified by three; and the commencement of another, meant by the half. The same is meant by the time, times, and half a time. The earthquake (ver. 13) represents the sinking and complete falling down of the principles of the Old Church, and their utter inadequacy to support and save mankind: and then come the great voices in heaven announcing the commencement of a New Church, and a new state of the world, in which one Divine Person, who is God and Christ, shall gradually bring all things under His blessed government. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He (not they), shall reign for ever and ever (ver. 15). That which is thus announced in the preceding chapter, is brought forth more fully in the glorious object in our text, the woman clothed with the sun.

A woman has ever been the chief symbol of the Church. The relation between the Lord and the Church is most correctly represented by the relation between a true husband and a faithful wife. Thus in the Old Testament it is written: "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called."—Isa. liv. 5. "For the Lord (Jehovah) hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,

and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God."—Ver. 6. Here it is evident that the Lord is considered as the Divine Husband, and the Church as His wife. This idea pervades the whole Word. When the Jewish Church became false, faithless, and idolatrous, it is regarded as a rejected and condemned wife: and the Gentiles who embraced the Christian religion, are described as a new wife who had previously not been blessed with children, but who would far surpass her degraded predecessor. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord (Jehovah)"—Ver. 1. When the Lord would represent the Church's separation to be from her own corruption, not from Him, He says, by the prophet: "Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."

The same idea is conspicuous in the Gospel, only there the Lord Jesus is the bridegroom and husband, and the Church is His wife: a circumstance only in harmony with the truth that He is Jehovah manifested in the flesh; for the Church would surely not be like a wife who has two husbands, or three. John the Baptist represents himself to be the friend of the bridegroom, but the Lord Jesus as being the bridegroom Himself. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."—John iii. 29. The apostle Paul speaks in a similar manner. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."—2 Cor. xi. 2. And again in the epistle to the Ephesians: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it. For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." The reason and the beauty of this correspondence will appear if we reflect upon the mutual relations of husband and wife to each other. The husband is delighted to supply his wife with every comfort; his counsel guides, his strength defends her. Whatever wisdom or intellectual power he possesses from God, he uses to give firmness and energy to his home, and happiness to

his beloved partner. So is the Lord to the whole universe, but especially to heaven and the Church. A wife on the other hand loves her husband, and him only, as a husband. She trusts in his judgment, she has confidence in his strength and protection, she delights in carrying out his views so far as she can see them to be right. She seeks daily to become more fully possessed from the Lord of that real virtuous heavenly affection which, combined with her husband's truth, may form a sweet atmosphere throughout their circle, of wisdom and love combined. So is it with the Church, the bride and the wife of the Lamb. She loves the wisdom and laws of the Lord Jesus, and worships Him alone : she looks to Him only for light, and strength : His will is to her the divine law : she loves His ways, and looks to an everlasting abode in His kingdom : she is that king's daughter of whom it is said : "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship thou him."—Ps. xlv. 10, 11. The Church, then, is the Lord's wife : she loves Him—leans upon Him—twines her affections around Him—confides in Him—is jealous for His honour, worship, and dignity, and clings fondly to Him in life, death, and eternity. She, therefore, is represented by this glorious woman. And the teachings of this chapter shew us that when the Church would be manifested to the world, she would be a great wonder, she would startle and astonish mankind, and would have to encounter the fierce opposition of those who are meant by the dragon, which sends out floods from his mouth to destroy her and her man-child.

The Church, then, especially as to her love for the Lord, His law, His kingdom, and His children, is meant by this woman. And, in truth, it is this love which forms the very essence of the Church. The Lord said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John xiii. 34, 35. No other qualifications have the Church in them if there be not charity in them. "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."—1 Cor. xiii. 2. Those who perish, do so, says the apostle, "Because they received not the LOVE OF THE TRUTH that they might be saved."—2 Thess. ii. 10.

To be, then, in the love of truth and goodness, is to be in that blessed community, the Church, which is represented by

the magnificent symbol presented to the spiritual sight of St. John, "a woman clothed with the sun." Happy, thrice happy are we, when, however gifted we may be in knowledge, understanding, and intellectual talents and attainments, we entreat the divine mercy to fill and sanctify them all by the central saving principle, the principle of holy love. Love purifies the soul, love elevates the soul, love links the soul to God and to man, "love is the fulfilling of the law." This woman, it is said, was clothed with the sun.

We have often mentioned the correspondence of the heavenly bodies, and here it is very strikingly brought out. No one would give them in this place a literal interpretation.

The sun corresponds to the Divine Love, and this all-essential source of blessedness appears to the angels of heaven as a sun immeasurably surpassing ours in splendour, and while its holy glow warms, it also blesses them. The Lord (Jehovah) is a sun and a shield. He giveth grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly (Ps. lxxxiv. 11). The same sun is described by the Lord, through the prophet, in the last chapter of the Old Testament: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."—Ver. 2. The sun is the centre of the solar system, Divine Love is the centre of the spiritual system. The sun warms all nature, Divine Love warms all heaven, and every heaven-seeking spirit in the world. The sun is a grand attractive centre, preventing the planetary bodies who revolve round him from whirling lawlessly away into destruction; the Divine Love draws all who receives its influence towards their heavenly Father, and preserves them from being broken away from God and happiness, by the downward tendency of their selfhood. The sun is the active cause of all the beauteous flowers and goodly fruits: until he warms the earth in spring all is cold, stiff, and cheerless; when he comes forth, the earth is robed in loveliness; every flowery mead and lovely garden, the balmy air, the glorious forest, and the sparkling river, all announce the blessing of his presence. So is it with Love Divine. The soul is cold, chilled and barren, until Divine Love cheers, encourages, and quickens the affections. When that holy principle is shed abroad in the heart and diffuses energy, joy, and peace, then lovely thoughts, like beauteous flowers, expand themselves in the mind; then fruits of righteousness begin to adorn the life; then the soul feels itself breathing a sweet and hallowed atmosphere; then old things, indeed, pass away, and all things, as Paul said, become new. The woman then, was clothed with the sun, to teach us that the Church in her

purity is filled, nourished, embosomed and blessed, by the Divine Love of the Lord. Those sacred words of the prophet are realized in her: "The Lord (Jehovah) shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord (Jehovah) shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."—Isa. lx. 19, 20.

To be clothed with the sun is then the privilege of the Church, when she is single-hearted and true to the Saviour. She feels His presence cheering, purifying, exalting, and blessing her; He raising her up far above all that is low and sordid, with "healing in His wings."

The object next offering itself for our attention is the moon. "The moon was under her feet." And when we remember the two great lights mentioned in Genesis, "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night," we shall readily perceive that the moon corresponds to the light which shines in the soul when we are in states of spiritual night. The soul has its nights as well as its days. There are periods of obscurity and darkness, which come on, and alternate with those of brightness and joy. It is day when all is cheerful, bright, and happy with us. The sun shines upon our path, the birds sing, we can see our course readily, and we can "work while it is day" (John ix. 4). But after a time the night cometh, and nights are various. Sometimes the night comes as a calm and friendly one; it is simply an alternation of state. Spiritual things have gone into shade, we think little of them. We have been exulting in the holy light and joy which Divine Love poured about us, but a finite wing cannot always soar. Our limited powers tire, and must have rest, variety, and restoration. He giveth His beloved sleep. A natural state comes on, and spiritually it is night. "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."—Mark iv. 26—28. Day and night are as necessary in spiritual things as in those of nature. We should be worn out without change. In wakefulness we consume the power God has given us in the hours of rest and silence. In sleep we are renewed. Divine mercy operates in secret, and we arise recreated and strong for another day. Such is the blessing of the night. In spiritual things the mind opens with delight to the beauties of the Divine Word. Worship is welcome, and we enjoy a delightful season of re-

freshing. There are showers of blessing, and like the apostles of old, we exclaim, "It is good for us to be here! Let us make tabernacles and abide." It is full day. But, after a season, we feel the necessity of a change. We have been hearing and enjoying, now we must go and act. We have ascended the heavenly ladder with the angels; we must, with them, now descend. We have gone in and found pasture, now we must go out. We have had our spiritual day, now we must have night, and that is often the period of external activity. We are engaged in natural business, and our spiritual feelings and perceptions become dim. It is night; we are no longer conscious of the cheering presence of the light of love in which we formerly rejoiced, but we are not without light, we have the light of faith: this is the moon. Faith, like a beautiful moon, rules the night. Like nature's moon, which shines by borrowed light, but is an evidence that the sun still shines, though he is not seen, faith still speaks of God's love, and assures us that it will return again. Faith brightens our night, and, like a brilliant moon, lights the pilgrim on his way. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen."—Heb. xi. 1. It speaks of God and His love, of heaven and its blessedness. It cheers the weary soul with assurances of hope and coming joy. When the spirit feels its sin it says, like the little maid in Syria, "Would God my master were with the prophet that is in the midst of Israel, and he would heal him." And like the prophet Elisha, when the soul is surrounded by enemies, it says, "Fear not, they that be with us are more than they that be with them." It whispers confidence and quietness in duty and in sorrow. When the heart is sad the faith may still be bright. The sun's golden light has gone, but the moon's silvery ray is there. And the soul can pass through the night state, cheered by encouragements to firmness, trust and hopefulness, which thus brightens the otherwise sombre scene. Though we do not pour forth our energies in works of love, we can still maintain our ground by works of faith. The tree of life, in the midst of the New Jerusalem, is said to bring forth "twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—Rev. xxii. 2. The spiritual months are the states of the soul which result from the brightness or dimness of faith. And if our religion be true and solid, whatever be the internal clearness or dimness in which our minds may be, we shall still bring forth fruit every month. We may be cold and cheerless, but we shall still hold to the right and do justly. We may be suffering a storm of temptation and opposition, but we shall bring forth

patience, resignation, firmness, gentleness, charity, perseverance. "In every state, when there are not precious things brought forth by the sun, there will be precious things put forth by the moon."—Deut. xxxii. 14. Faith will not only be sufficient to sustain us, but to inspire us to sing songs in the night. "The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life."—Psalm xlii. 8.

Of the Church triumphant it is said, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." When love is warm and powerful, and faith is full and clear, and these have been fixed triumphantly by all opposition in us being subdued, the days of our mourning are indeed ended.

Upon such a moon, then, the woman was observed to stand. And so it is with the true Church. She relies on an enlightened faith, not upon dark mysteries. The moon reflects light, and illuminates the darkness, and just in proportion as it faces and reflects the sun. Faith, in proportion as it perceives the Divine Love prevalent in all things, affords light and comfort to its possessor. When it perceives this slightly, it is new moon; when it beholds the Divine Love, not only in creation but in redemption, and in every change of the regenerate life, the moon increases in splendour until it becomes full; and then, even while shade is around, the soul can realize the grateful adoration expressed in the beautiful words, slightly altered,—

"O blest be His name, who in sorrow's stern hour
Hears the prayer of affliction, and sends forth His power;
Like the moon o'er the valley, night-shadowed and dim,
O'er the heart breathes the spirit of mercy from Him;
Oh bless His name!"

While, then, the sun of the Divine Love is described as embosoming the woman, the moon of faith is under her feet. The one affords nourishment, support, and joy, the other yields a firm foundation. Faith is a rock, derived from the rock of ages. And a clear, firm, heartfelt, rational, spiritual faith, will enable the members of the Church to stand firm under every trial, and to conquer in every conflict. Upon this rock the Lord builds His Church, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matt. xvi. 18. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 John v. 4. May it be our happy lot, my beloved brethren, not only to have that affection for the Lord's truth which constitutes us part of His bride and wife, but also find, in every change, and in all our course of

duty, that security against falling on the road of life which is obtained by the moon being under our feet.

“There was upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”

The stars are used to represent the glorious possessions of this woman, because they correspond to the smaller lights of religion afforded by individual truths. When we clearly see and know the spiritual lesson afforded by each verse of the Holy Word, it becomes a star in the firmament of the soul. When the mind is well stored with the sacred knowledges of divine things, it is like the heavens in the night-time, when the sky is radiant and robed with brilliancy. When the soul has no longer the bright manifest presence of the sun of righteousness, and shade and darkness come on, it is a blessed thing to have first one and then another small but holy light breaking in upon us like star after star, which shews its lovely ray in the evening, until the whole gorgeous canopy is lighted up. “We have also,” says Peter, “a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”—2 Peter i. 19, 20. Here the apostle says the inward light of truth is a star which shines within the heart. The same use of star is clearly intended by the promise in the Revelations, to him that overcometh in the church of Thyatira it is promised. “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and I will give him the morning star.”—ii. 26, 28. But certainly it is not in the way of the divine dealings to give to any one who overcomes his evils the morning star of nature. No intelligible or consolatory lesson would come from thus understanding the passage. But to those meant by the church of Thyatira, those who make their outward life to illustrate and confirm their interior religion, the Lord always gives the morning star. Each state through which they pass, opens the way to another. The evening of one is followed by the morning of another; and their knowledge of the Lord is ever a clear and bright beacon before them to herald in a new dawn. It is the morning star. Its light is from the Lord himself, shining in the soul. “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and the morning star.”—Rev. xxii. 16.

The twelve stars represent all the knowledges of divine things. The number twelve in the usage of the Divine Word, represents all things both of goodness and truth: it is the compound of 4 and 3 multiplied together. Even numbers, and espe-

cially 2 and 4, refer to goodness, which induces evenness, smoothness, and completeness, while the number 3, which is the base of all measurement, and the means of all correct calculation, is the symbol of completeness in truth. Because of this representative character of twelve it was that the whole Church, in the typical dispensation of the Jews, was represented by the twelve tribes of Israel. In the Gospel also, the Lord chose twelve apostles. In this whole book of Revelation, the number twelve appears with remarkable frequency, and always with this signification of completeness, both as to goodness and truth. Those who were sealed, as the sacred ones in the seventh chapter, are twelve thousand of each tribe. Those who follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, are twelve times twelve thousand. The new Jerusalem has twelve foundations, with the names of the twelve apostles in them. It has also twelve gates. The city was measured, and found to be twelve thousand furlongs: the wall was twelve times twelve cubits high. In all these cases the idea is that of completeness, both as to goodness and truth. Here it is the same. The woman is said to have a diadem of twelve stars, to teach us that she loves and honours all the instructions that come from the Lord: all the knowledges of goodness and truth are to her so many stars, and she makes them her glory and her crown. The head represents the highest intellectual faculty, and a diadem the wisdom which enriches and adorns that faculty in the Lord's true servants. They do not esteem the knowledge of Him and His kingdom as things indifferent; they are the glories of their intellect: they do not wear them about their feet; they are their crown.

Such was the wonderful and magnificent sign, which the beloved John beheld in heaven. It was a glorious representation of the church, such as is common in the spiritual world, where the ideas of thought and instruction immediately embody themselves in scenery. It described the church as it would at length be unfolded in the world. But the difficulty that would attend it at first is described by the further divine words, "And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

The man-child which she desired to bring forth, represents the new system of doctrine and order of society, which she desired to initiate. Instead of the love of self which had so long desolated society, and made God's earth a scene of turmoil, struggle, and distress, she desires to substitute the love of God, and love to one another. Instead of injustice to others, and the effort of each to subject his fellow to himself, she would substitute justice, fair-

ness, a regard for the rights and happiness, the possessions and comforts of others. Instead of mystery she would substitute light: light in all things. She would abolish duplicity and subterfuge of every kind, and in all the works and ways of life, religious, literary, political, and commercial. The wild mass of selfish, dark, and false axioms upon which actual society has too long acted, she would displace for the divine law of "doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with the Lord." The idea of seeking for happiness in dignified uselessness, she would replace by the assurance from heaven, that even the blessedness of the angels is from their usefulness. The kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom of uses, and he who would be like an angel in happiness, must be like an angel in earnest, loving service. The jealous insolence with which nations have too long regarded each other, she would exchange for that aim of each to advance the interest and happiness of all the rest, which comes from a deep conviction of the brotherhood of nations. Instead of life's business being regarded as a mere worldly pursuit, she would teach all men in all things to live the life of heaven. She would regard them as angels in training. Their daily life is a daily opportunity of becoming heavenly. The ruling love when celestial, is the sculptor who, from the rude rough block of the natural man, is to form angelic beauty. Every holy impulse, every useful effort, every exertion which goes into just acts especially, chips off some excrescence, and brings out some lovely feature more perfectly. The virtues which spring from love to God, by daily habit diffuse themselves through every feature; and innocence, reverence, justice, gentleness, trust beam from the eyes and the whole countenance, and portray the blessed work which habit is doing within. Life in the world is this sculptor's workshop; each bargain, each work, each event is the opportunity for another stroke, and the result at last is the beautiful spiritual body, breathing benevolence and wisdom combined, the likeness of God and the outbirth of love. Unlike Prometheus, who made his form from clay first, and then vainly sought with stolen fire to simulate creative life, this wise sculptor asks first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, first for the holy fire of heavenly love to create within a new heart and right spirit, and thence comes the outer beauty of the spirit of God in man.

Such is the new system of doctrine and practice which the Lord's New Church would fain engender. But ah, she cries, travelling in birth, and pained to be delivered.

When society has been so long formed upon the two great sources of mischief, selfishness and mystery, as so-called Chris-

tendom has, we need not wonder that purer principles should at first be received with difficulty. This difficulty arises from two causes, a contrary faith, and a contrary life. The understanding has been wedded to mystery, and led to think that as God conceals His way from man, and still requires him to believe, so safety can only be had by our concealing our ways from one another, and covering all our operations with mystery directed by self-seeking. Hence each trade, each business, each art, the concerns of each nation, have been covered as much as possible from others, and surrounded by selfish regulations. Each community by selfish scheming has sought to overcome others, and get as much as possible for itself. Religious communities have not been less grasping and less vindictive than others, but more; there, have been the centre and focus of the wrong: witness their bitter animosities and persecutions of each other. When then a better system is proclaimed, firstly it can hardly be believed, and secondly, when a few receive it, they have difficulty in bringing it into practice.

To be told that God is love, that God is light, and that infinite love and light embodied in Jesus Christ send out their Holy Spirit to create, save and bless the universe, and these are the Divine Trinity, makes the ears at first to tingle. What, are all the mysteries of the Godhead to be given up, and can we know plainly of the Father? Are we no longer to wonder and admire that venerable collection of contradictions which the Church has said every one must believe "whole and undefiled," or "without doubt we shall perish everlastingly?" Dare we venture to think of God as an all-loving, all-glorious Divine Man, who has all power in heaven and on earth, and look to Him for every blessing? Dare we throw aside the mysterious phrases which declare that God has no body, nor parts, nor passions, and yet that He has three distinct personal forms or bodies? Dare we indeed believe that Jesus, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, loves us infinitely, has ever loved us with an unchangeable love, and in His love and in His pity redeemed us? Dare we think this strange doctrine true with all its consequences, and thus pass from the religion of terror to the religion of love? It is hard, but still the woman cries in pain to be delivered: she urges, that the whole word, and the whole world are proofs that God is love. She cries there is only one God, and never can be another (Isa. lxiii. 11). She cries, What you have been taught your God is, you feel you ought not to be yourself: she cries, Evil loves mystery, goodness loves the light: she cries, Try to become such a person yourself as a God of Love is, and you will find you

come nearer to Him, and feel His blessed presence : she cries, Love God, and you will know Him ; in Him is no darkness at all. He is the " Father of lights, in whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning."—James i. 17. She cries, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself ; and God is in Christ, and will reconcile you unto Himself. Come unto Him, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. She cries, with the voice of Scripture, " Jesus is the first and the last ;" she cries, with the voice of reason, " One hand has made and sustains the universe." She cries, with the voice of science, All things are manifestly the result of the love which impelled, the wisdom which directed, and the power which executed their creation ; and these three are one. She cries, and is pained to be delivered. But after a time a few receive her testimony intellectually ; but then comes a greater struggle. They have conformed their thoughts to the truth, but their hearts and lives are yet to be brought into the order of truth and goodness. Here is a greater struggle. Self has been enthroned in the heart, and must be cast down, or the infant cannot yet be truly born, much less grow up and rule. The heart finds it hard to give up its idols, and trust to goodness, justice, and order alone for happiness : we hang to the love of great wealth, and fear we cannot be happy without it : we are prone to rush forward in the race for dignity and distinction, and hang upon others for that peace which comes from God only : we are inclined to follow the world's rules, and the world's law, when we admit they are what has made the world miserable in its long race of misrule and injustice. When we would do good, evil is present with us. We are slow to move when only duty, truth and goodness require our action ; but quick when some selfish advantage is to be attained. Our nature has been so thoroughly perverted, that we find it a heavy and a daily task to bring ourselves to walk in the light of the Holy City : to grow up to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus. Yet this is what must be done. There is no church in us, and will be no heaven for us, without it. " The kingdom of God is within you."—Luke xvii. 21. The woman still travails in birth to be delivered, and though with difficulty, yet the man-child is born. And he is indeed a noble infant. Oh what a glorious society will be formed when this goodly child shall rule the nation : His grand requirements will be from all, justice, truth, usefulness, peace. This doctrine from heaven will incessantly say, Thy will be done, as in heaven, even so upon the earth : Thy kingdom come. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for

ever and ever. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." This doctrine will say, No one can do the will of God, unless he knows what that will is, and sees the reasons for its being done, and the misery which springs from its violation: see, then, that every child is educated, and has its faculties properly developed. That doctrine will say to parents and to friends, Diffuse the truth in love, make your religion strew around you the blessings of life: make a heaven at home: never represent the Lord as the curtailer of human joys, but as the soul of them: give those around you as many roses as possible, but deprived of sinful thorns. That doctrine will proclaim, Shun sin as the curse of life, the separator from God, the destroyer of peace, the serpent which poisons homes, hearts, kingdoms, the relentless foe of a happy death, the creator of a miserable hell. Its incessant invitation to all will be, "Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God."

Oh, how changed will earth's homes become as this man-child becomes more fully born, and grows, and rules. How sad it is to see mankind, at this stage of the earth's progress, so far from what they might be. Millions even in this country, growing up in neglect, ignorance, filth, and poverty. Did true Christian principles prevail, cleanliness, comfort, and knowledge, would be found in every home. None should hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain. The earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Did trust in the love of God prevail among us, what a change would be produced in that mass of hurry, care and keenness, denominated business. Why need men wear themselves to death and harass their neighbours, in the wearisome struggle for those necessaries of existence which are sure to be provided, if, from love, we do our duty? Trust in the Lord and do good, and thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Was love to our neighbour the established divine law of living, how earnest we should be for his rights, his comforts, his good! Whatsoever we would that he should do to us, we should do the same to him, and do it with pleasure, for he is our brother!

Oh that the time for this blessed state of things may be hastened! The woman is indeed crying to be delivered; may myriads come to aid. She is gloriously beautiful, earnest to bless. She is the Lamb's wife, and adorned for her husband. Let us seek to receive her blessed child into our bosoms, and pray that the little one may become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation. May the Lord hasten it in His time.

The New Church now, as former churches have done in ages gone by, yearns to be visible and effective among men. Heavenly as she is within, glowing with love, steadfast in faith, and brilliant with knowledges, she cries in pain to be delivered. May her heartfelt cries never be unheeded by us. First let us faithfully bring her principles into living action in ourselves. May we be wisely led to question our motives, and ascertain if they originate in God. Do we wish his will to prevail in all our proceedings? Do we wish his wisdom to mould and direct all our ways? Remembering that time is fleeting, and we know not how long it may be ours, do we keep, like our Lord, eternal ends in view? Do we inwardly ask how far our business transactions, or our daily work, contribute to form in us a spirit of justice, a desire of fairness to others as well as duty to ourselves?

"Religion's path they never trod
Who equity contemn;
Nor ever are they just to God
Who prove unjust to men."

Let it then be our first and chief aim to bring the rule of the man-child fully into our daily conduct, and evincing an example in our lives of the blessedness of living for heaven and earth at the same time, we shall then be able to assist others in their life-work by encouragement and counsel, and that not only in private but in public matters. For surely the woman cries loudly, that the earth is groaning from a thousand sorrows, which are but the results of ignorance, folly, and falsehood. The dark parts of the earth are full of cruelty. She longs to displace ignorance by knowledge, folly by wisdom, and falsehood by truth. She feels strong in the power of God, to make earth a terrestrial paradise. She burns to bless by diffusing her holy and happy teachings. May her sacred impulses be soon successful, and earth will then be transformed to an image of heaven. Men shall dwell under their own vine, and under their own fig-tree, none making them afraid.

SERMON XXXII.

THE DRAGON FOILED, AND THE CHURCH PRESERVED.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”—Rev. xii. 3, 4.

IN our last discourse we endeavoured to admire the beauty of the Church, now in its infancy, which is to be the Church of the future, as represented by the woman clothed by the sun. And seeing that she is the symbol of a Church which will love the Lord supremely as her husband, rest upon a true faith in the Lord with a firm and holy trust, and at the same time be adorned with the bright stars of heavenly knowledge, like a diadem of beauty, one might imagine that the new doctrine and state of society she would bring forth would be welcomed by all. But it is not so. There is presented to our view by the next wonder, a fearful opposing power, represented by the great dragon standing ready to devour the man-child as soon as it was born. It was a saying of one of the Grecian sages, that virtue is so lovely that if she could appear in her own pure charms on earth, she would win all hearts. But this is only partially true. Virtue is lovely to those who love virtue. The sunbeams are hateful to the owl. To the lazy and impure cleanliness is abhorrent. Goodness and wisdom incarnate did once tread the earth, and were crucified. We must not, therefore, be surprised when we find that principles which are to us clear as daylight, are rejected by the prejudiced as absurd, and teachings which are those of justice itself are regarded for that very reason with abhorrence by the selfish.

Ever since wrong commenced, there has been a bitter antagonism between it and right. Though varying with varied circumstances, all moral wrong and all falsehood have their deep

origin in selfishness. This monster-evil displays itself in ten thousand ways, but in essence it is always the same, the substitute of man's individual will for the will of God. In our first parents this principle displayed itself in the suggestion that they should not be altogether led by the Lord and His wisdom, but should use their life as their own, and conclude that what their senses taught them was truer than the teaching of God's wisdom. They determined to eat of the tree of their own knowledge, and be, as they fancied, as gods. Their self-will, which the moment it is separated from the will of God becomes evil-will, was the root of error then, and is so to the present day. From the simplest cheat to the mightiest fraud, from the snatch of the meanest thief, to those immense burglaries which ambition makes and calls heroic conquests; from the juggle of an overreaching shopman, to those elaborate systems of false theology which cheat masses of nations, and make them the abject slaves of grovelling superstitions; leading their fanatical millions to reject those principles of mercy, justice, and truth, by which alone God serves men, and can renovate nations, the deep ground of all these wrongs is self, self, self. This is the old serpent, which, with one or another skin, with one or another form, without wings or with wings, as the case may require, deceiveth the whole world (Rev. xii. 9).

Between lawless self-love under all its manifestations, in private and in public life, in State and in Church, in essence and in doctrine, and the Lord's pure Church, which is formed from love and wisdom, there is inherent and instinctive aversion. A selfish system dreads the advent of disinterested love. An evil system dreads the presence of goodness. A false system, shrouded in mystery, dreads the presence of light, and scents that which it hates afar off. It stands ready to devour the man-child as soon as it is born (ver. 4).

Such has ever been the case, and we must not be surprised that the New Church of the Lord at this day should find a similar opposition. Every new unfolding of truth and goodness from heaven finds the state of society previously formed by selfishness and mystery ready to assail it, and if possible to destroy.

Thus was it when the Lord Himself came upon the earth. He ushered into the world new doctrines of love and light. The common people heard Him gladly. When He spoke of mercy, justice, faith, universal brotherhood, and of a better world beyond the grave, a few souls welcomed the joyful tidings, but not the priests and the powerful. The Sadducees and the Pharisees watched around, not to receive, but to betray. They stood ready

to ensnare and then accuse. They declared He had a devil, that He was mad, and that He was a traitor. No matter to them that He was purity and love incarnate. No matter that He blessed the poor, fed the hungry thousands, healed the sick, and raised the dead; He came to supersede the dominion of selfishness and sin, and therefore the selfish hated Him. The wily priests hung round to catch His words, that they might misrepresent and pervert them. The serpent writhed within them, and prepared to bite. By the power of His love and wisdom the Saviour was crushing the serpent's head, and with instinctive hate the serpent struck at His lowest part, His human nature, His heel, the only part that it could reach. The serpent, then, in His case, stood ready to devour, and at length nailed Him to the cross, crying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

We may now be prepared to perceive the application of the divine description of the "great dragon" who stood before the woman ready to devour her child as soon as it was born. It represents the selfish system of a fallen Church, ready to oppose and destroy the new manifestation of divine truth, as given in the New Jerusalem. The serpent is the symbol of self-love, and a dragon is a serpent with wings. The wings denote the soaring power with which self-love decks itself when it professes to be religious. It had seven heads to represent its pretended great intelligence in holy things, and crowns upon its heads as emblems of divine truths, shining but perverted; ten horns to signify its extensive power by truths from the Word, which it parades but misinterprets.

The great dragon is then a pretended religion, which is, however, nothing but disguised selfishness. Let us look at each of these features in detail.

The serpent, as being the form on earth which corresponds to self-love in its disorderly state, when we call it selfishness, is felt to be truly so instinctively by us all, and is so used throughout the Divine Word. How common is it with us, when we see a person pursuing his own low ends, by subtle secret means winding round others, and at last destroying them for his own advantage, to say that such a one is a real serpent! The Word supplies us with frequent and undoubted use of this correspondence of the serpent. Such only could be its meaning when, after the fall, it is said, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shall thou eat all the days of thy life."—Gen. iii. 14. For no outward serpent eats natural dust all the days of its life. But selfishness is always low and mean and crawling, and has no aim higher than the *dust* of earthly possessions all the days of its life. Between the

woman and her seed, the Church and her children, and the serpent and his seed, or selfishness, and its children, there would be perpetual enmity. The seed of the woman, the children of the Church, and especially that divine child in which Jehovah Himself was, would bruise the serpent's head, would conquer selfishness in its very root, which He did when He overcame the powers of hell. The same use of serpent is made in the latter portion of Genesis. It is said, Dan is a serpent by the way, an adder in the path. He biteth the horse's heels, and makes his rider fall backward (Gen. xlix. 17). Dan was not, of course, a literal serpent, or adder in the path; but so far as he was actuated by selfishness in heart and in thought he was spiritually a serpent and an adder, and when selfishness assails the intellect by which we ought to advance on the path of truth as on a noble horse, and subverts it to dishonest objects, it bites the horse's heels and makes his rider fall backward.

In the Psalms the serpent is frequently introduced as the correspondence of the selfish nature. "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is as the poison of serpents: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."—Psalm lviii. 3—5. Again, "Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man; which imagine mischiefs in their heart; continually are they gathered together for war. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips."—Psalm cxl. 1—3. By bearing in mind the correspondence of the serpent, these passages are at once seen to be most true and most instructive. For no poison is so destructive as falsehood. The tongue of the intensely selfish man is sharpened like a serpent indeed.

When we come to the Gospels, the spiritual signification of serpent meets us very early, and continues throughout. When John was baptizing and preaching repentance, he saw many of those embodiments of selfishness—the pious pretenders who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers; and it is recorded, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance."—Matt. iii. 7, 8. No one can fail to discern, in this graphic description by John, the perception on his part of the designing character of these wicked priests. They spoke of God, but they meant their own interests. They loved the flock, but only for the sake of the

fleece. They spread abroad their sanctimonious pretences like a spider's web, to catch the simple and the unwary, who, when they walked into the snare, discovered that what they had supposed was the path to heaven was but the way to a den of thieves. The Lord Jesus tore the holy mask from these serpent-faces with still more scathing bitterness,—

“He judged them with as terrible a frown,
As if not love but wrath had brought Him down.”

Read the whole of the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, and you will have the character of the serpent in religion truly delineated. See for instance, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell.”—Ver. 27, 28, 33.

This denunciation seems to be terrible and wonderful, as proceeding from Him who was love, pity, and tenderness itself. But we must remember to Him all hearts are known. He sees principles in all their depth, and in their true character. To Him this spirit of selfishness is the foulest thing in existence. It has in it all the monstrosities which defile earth, and create hell. Robberies, murders, adulteries, all proceed from it. Every transgression of the law comes from the sinner lawlessly rushing in to gratify his own will and lust, instead of the will of God, and the happiness of his neighbour. Selfishness then, when seen by Him to whom all hearts are open, and all time is now, appears as one enormous serpent composed of innumerable smaller serpents; that old serpent which deceiveth the whole world. The great business of all religion is to conquer this serpent in every one of us. Unless selfishness is overcome there can no progress be made. We may be amused with the fancy that we are Christians, because we attend to religious worship, but unless self be overcome we are simply sailing on the current of life, the victims of a fond delusion. We are not worshippers of God, but like many ancient nations we are insane worshippers of the serpent, the most degrading form of worship. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me (Matt. xvi. 24). This is the Lord's first and grand requirement, yet how few learn it. He who has not, however, learned this, has as yet learned nothing as he ought to learn it. Deny self, or you will not obey God. Deny self, or you will

not receive truth purely, but will pervert it. Deny self, or you cannot be happy. Deny self, or you cannot enter heaven, where all is disinterested love. It will be hard, but that is the cross you have to bear, the battle you have to fight.

" And he who bears the cross to-day,
Shall wear the crown to-morrow."

We cannot of ourselves destroy our serpents, but the Lord will give us power to do so. He says, " Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means hurt you."— Luke x. 19. By the help of Him, then, who conquered all the efforts of the powers of darkness, and sanctified His own human nature that He might give us power to purify ours, we can obtain the victory over self-love in all its unhappy forms. From being proud we can become truly humble; from being conceited we can become yielding and deferential; from being hard and stern we can become gentle and considerate; from being cold and stately we can become warm and happy. We can tread on the serpent of self-love and the scorpion of malignant falsehood, and deprive them of that life by which all things die around them, and fill their places with that heavenly life which is the source of every blessedness.

The great and terrible figure before us, then, is indicative of a system which, though prepared to soar, and having much power and much adornment, yet is deeply grounded in selfishness, and would be ready with all its might to oppose the New Church and its heavenly doctrine. It was a serpent, but a serpent with wings—a dragon. Wings are the means by which birds soar, and they correspond to those general truths by means of which men's thoughts soar—the conviction that there is a heaven to which we should aspire; and all the truths connected with our immortal life form wings, as it were, to the soul, and give it lofty flights. This soaring tendency of the spirit is perceived by all. It is our capacity to contemplate a celestial life, to rise above the bounds of time and space, and live in the atmosphere of an inner life. Poets often allude to this power, and all feel it.

" My soul, on wings of ardour rise !
Contemplate yonder happy skies,
The home of all the blest !
Fain to this kingdom I would soar :
The world can captivate no more :
I seek the realms of rest."

The Scriptures often employ wings to designate the truths which help the soul to fly upward, and also defend it, for this is another office of wings. " They that wait upon the Lord," it is

said, "shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. xl. 31. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."—Ps. lxxviii. 13. The wings of a dove represent the soft, sweet truths of heavenly love. It was no wild wish the Psalmist uttered when he said, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest"—Ps. lv. 6, but the yearning of a soul wearied with struggle and contention, and longing for lofty thoughts of peace and heaven.

The Lord is said to have wings, because all truths which elevate the soul are from Him. When we feel these truths protecting us from the world's cold blast, we are said to be under the shadow of His wings. To the humble loving soul who trusts in Him, it is said, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler."—Ps. xci. 4. Here the protecting principle is called His truth. Again, "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."—Ps. xxxvi. 7. And that tender expostulation of our Lord in the Gospel, where He declares that all the hindrance to salvation comes from man and not from Him, uses the same spiritual sense of wings. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not."—Luke xiii. 34. That is, the Lord constantly invites us to come under the influence and protection of His holy truths. For want of perceiving this spiritual sense of wings, not only has much of the language of the Word been obscure, but some ideas have become common which will not bear examination. The angels are said in the Word to fly, as we have seen men are said to fly, to mount up and to have wings; but those who never dream of applying literal wings to men or to the Lord, have thought it meant that angels really had wings in addition to having arms. But we should not forget that wings to the bird are what arms are to men; they are, in fact, imperfect arms, as fins are to fishes, and to fix them to angelic beings would be to place upon them the marks and appendages of a rank in creation much lower than man. No; the angels fly, but on the wings of contemplation, not of outward shape. And when our contemplative powers are furnished with sacred interior lessons of wisdom, we can take flight far beyond beings of inferior wing. It is of such truth,

that it is written, "The Sun of righteousness shall arise upon those who fear His name, with healing in His wings."—Mal. iv. 2.

But the wings of the dragon are false principles of religion, by which there is an imitation of truth, but only an imitation. There is a flying upwards, but it is only the flying of a serpent. That is to say, it is a system of pretended truth respecting God, and heaven, and eternal things, but altogether, in its interior character, selfish. It would be constructed with great ingenuity and skill, indicated by its having seven heads. It would have much power of persuasiveness and apparent truth intimated by its ten horns, and would make a great display of heavenly wisdom, misapplied.

The heads are seven, to signify, as that number ever does, completeness, and a relation to holy things; but as they are heads of the dragon, they represent that complete, but perverted, ingenuity by which a false religion satisfies its deluded adherents. The unity of true religion is represented by a beautiful woman with one head; the inconsistency of a perverted religion is signified by a monster with seven heads. It will be found, on a close examination of a perverted religion, that its principles, however ingenious they may seem when separately examined, are not only inconsistent with the truth, but also inconsistent with each other. The heads are divided.

Horns are the emblems of power. Horned animals push, and exert their power by means of their horns. Hence, it is said by the Psalmist, "All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."—Ps. lxxv. 10. And again, "I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly; and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn: lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck"—ver. 4, 5, where no one can fail to see that horn is symbolical of power. It is so used in relation to the Lord Himself. It is said, in the prophecy of Habakkuk, "And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand, and there was the hiding of His power." The hand of God means His omnipotence, and the horns which come out of His hand represent the varied powers which His omnipotence supplies for all the requirements of His servants in heaven and on earth.

The crowns, or diadems, as the Greek word more properly expresses, are literally fillets, or bands, for the head, beautified with precious stones. They represent, therefore, a display of numerous heavenly truths of considerable brilliancy, for these are spiritual precious stones, but decorating principles inwardly false,

nothing but dragons' heads. Beautiful truths are the goodly pearls which spiritual merchantmen seek (Matt. xiii. 45). They are what the divine promise implies in Isaiah, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."—Chap. liv. 11—13.

Precious truths are like precious stones; they are exceedingly beautiful, they shine like gems; but they are sometimes used to decorate systems which are inwardly most injurious and profane. Hence, we read of the woman, who is styled Babylon the great, the mother of the abominations of the earth, being "decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls"—Rev. xvii. 4; and here of the diadems which were on the heads of the dragon. Every religion lives by its real or supposed power of meeting the demands of the soul for inward peace and everlasting happiness. True religion is genuine, pure, healthful, and wears the glorious beauties of heavenly knowledge gracefully. False religion is inwardly corrupt, but decorates herself with many heavenly excellencies to charm by outward show, and to hide its interior iniquity. Such, then, is the system before us; secretly the same selfishness which has been the groundwork in every age of all the misery which has afflicted the whole world; but having an apparent air of great intelligence, great plausibility, great power, and an abundant use of the holy truths of the Word, ready, however, to oppose the Lord's bride, the New Jerusalem, and devour her manly and genuine doctrine. Ready to devour: hence we may gather that such a system would chiefly exist where the New Church would first and mainly appear.

Such a corrupt religion, and the tendencies to it in all minds, is represented by a dragon and dragons in other parts of the Word. Israel, when inwardly become corrupt, is described in Deuteronomy, and we read, "Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."—Chap. xxxii. 33. When the Lord's coming into the world is predicted, the transformation which would take place in human minds, while He imparted truth, and made fertility of soul where barrenness and falsehood were before, it is written, "And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes."—Isa. xxxv. 7. Where the dragons lay was where Pharisaic hypocrisy had been received. On the contrary, the good man

who loves the Lord is assured of the divine protection in that beautiful Psalm, the ninety-first, in these words, "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name."—Ver. 13, 14. Of course, we are not to suppose that the lover of the Lord is to go and trample upon outward beasts, and astonish the world by attempting strange and useless feats of dangerous hardihood; but the Lord will empower him to subdue those inward evils and false principles which are terrible and destructive to the soul, like lions and dragons.

Let us ask now, if there be any system at the present day of which the dragon may be seen to be the prophetic symbol: a system inwardly, profoundly selfish, but professing to have a regard for everything sacred and divine? Is there a system which describes the God of heaven in such awful terms, that it is in reality only self-love deified? Which, with religion in the mouth, great persuasiveness, and a profuse display of Biblical learning, yet contrives to leave its votaries greedy, sectarian, bigotted, and unjust? Is there a religion which removes the great terms of salvation from the laws of love to God and love to man to an obstinate, and often blind belief of certain theological dogmas, and those not true? Is there a system which has borne the name of religion, and loudly proclaimed its sanctity and worth, but has, nevertheless, left the inward principles of its votaries very much the same as those which govern the savage man, ambition, and the love of gain? We fear there is no difficulty in answering these questions. The religion of salvation by faith alone is precisely such a system. It makes a profession of sanctity, but is inwardly a serpent. The commandments of God are made of none effect, when they are declared to be non-essential to salvation. When a man's life is regarded as neither condemning nor saving, but only his faith, a system is set up essentially deceptive and fallacious. The evil will seize it, and prostitute religion itself. And this mixture of selfishness and salvation makes a dragon. No human examples of selfishness approach by far the character this system attributes to God. Human beings, when they are really only seeking their own glory in what they do, endeavour to hide it. But this system blazons it abroad that God does everything for His own glory. Human beings, even bad ones, are ashamed when it is shewn they are partial, and respect one child or one person, when there is no moral difference between them, more than another. But this system says, that God, before the foundation of the world, from His own sovereign caprice or

dained a few to be saved, and still went on creating innumerable millions, to whom He never gave the power of saving themselves, and whom He would not save, and yet He would punish in the most awful manner in hell for ever, because they did not do what they could not do. Even the laws of Draco, which are always mentioned with horror, and as written in blood, because they ordained temporal death for the least crime, were nothing in severity to what is pretended by this system to have been God's law, when, for eating an apple, He is said not only to have doomed man himself to temporal and eternal death, but all mankind then unborn also. No selfishness in the world has ever been so monstrous as that.

This system, then, goes on to divide God into three persons, notwithstanding it declares, also, that God has neither body, parts, nor passions; thus, presenting to the mind the idea of no personal form, and yet three personal forms—of a God who has no passion, and yet is so full of passion, that, for a slight offence he condemns a world, and only pardons a few, after he has infinitely punished his only-begotten Son. It sets before the mind's eye two divine persons, one most strict and fierce, who, although he has punished our Saviour infinitely, and thus been paid, in this awful manner, to exercise mercy to the uttermost, yet can with difficulty be got to deal out pardon, and that only to a few. This system proceeds, in the most elaborate manner, to describe the God it depicts as giving laws which never could be obeyed, and which He never intended should be obeyed, but uttering the most awful maledictions upon those who do not obey them, and urging continually that they should, they must be obeyed. It describes the Deity as frightening man to the utmost extremes of terror, under the plea of his not having obeyed the law; and then, at last, informing him that if he believes at any moment, even just before he dies, it will do quite as well. This awful system is a dragon of the most fearful kind. It has existed, and it exists now, and to its existence it is mainly owing, in Protestant countries, that real piety, real wisdom, real love, and real obedience to God's commandments are so rare, and mammon-worship and other idolatries, so common.

In Romanist countries it is the great Babylon sitting upon many waters, and making the nations drunk with her fornications, which usurps spiritual power over the souls of men, and blinds them with mysteries; but, in Protestant countries, it is the system of Justification by FAITH ALONE. This is the great dragon. It is described as red, from the fiery zeal with which it inspires selfish men. It should be observed, that all who

study the Word, and talk about it, but remain sensual and natural, and do not live it, are parts of this dragon. Self-love is its heart, self-derived intelligence its breath, the learned in its mysteries are its heads, the less so its body; those who follow in the wake, and adulterate and pervert the Word, until it is of no practical service to them in salvation, but all its holy truths are cast down, are the tail, which drew down the third part of the stars to the earth. When we look round upon the world, and observe a great profession of Christianity, and yet wonder that there is so much evil among mankind, we have often been puzzled to account for such a state of things. We see the religion of the Lord Jesus, as unfolded by Himself, is love to God, and love to man, brought forth into a spotless life. It is a religion of life: of daily life and of Sabbath life. It is a religion of being good, and doing good. It is a religion that has no fellowship with evil. It will do no one harm, but do all the good it can. This religion would make its members just, good, wise, and happy. But that is not the state of Christendom. How is it? Can it be the religion of Jesus which has so failed, and produced such perplexing results? Look over Europe, and see millions of men in arms to keep other millions in subjection and suffering. See everywhere the lower classes, despised, ignorant, discontented, moody, and miserable; the upper classes, with some bright exceptions, vain, heartless, frivolous, and exacting. How seldom is a bright cheerful faith to be seen, how often infidelity? Everywhere there is knavery, adulteration, uncertainty, and suspicion. Again we ask, are these the genuine products of the divine influence of the Saviour Jesus? Assuredly not. Look around, it is the religion of the dragon. Well may such results come from such a cause. Selfishness has decorated itself with the appearances of religion, but by its fruits we may know it. It can fly abroad, and shew itself as soaring to heaven, but it is only a flying serpent.

The two beasts mentioned in the following chapter, to which the dragon gave his power, and seat, and great authority, and which are afterwards called the beast and the false prophet, chap. xvi. 13, 14, represent the religion of faith alone, as received by the laity and by the clergy. The deadly wound which the first beast received, but which was afterwards healed, was the discovery, even early in its career, of the contrariety between this system and the Word, which ever insists on good works being done as essential to salvation. The deadly wound was healed, and this system made acceptable, when it was plausibly explained that good works, though not essential to

salvation, would flow from this faith as a natural consequence. Then the world wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon. Now, however, its character is better known. The good works that were to come do not come, except with such as are good from reading the Bible, and in spite of their false and dragon-like doctrine. The second beast, which had two horns like a lamb, and spake like a dragon, and caused the earth, and them that dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, who doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, represents the clergy, who have great influence from their meek profession of piety, and their fiery zeal as if from heaven, but who exert all their efforts and influence to maintain a system foreign to holiness, to justice, and to heaven.

When the Lord again gives pure religion, represented by the woman and her man-child, to mankind, such a system feels an instant opposition, and prepares for bitter conflict.

It is said, "The serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood."—Ver. 15.

The flood that comes out of the mouth will be easily seen to be false reasonings and accusations, which are made against the New Church opening among men. And those who have had much experience in watching the advance of truth, will readily recognize the fulfilment of this portion of prophecy. Wherever the sublime doctrine of the supreme and sole divinity of our blessed Saviour is unfolded, there the dragon is sure to cast out his flood. If the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ, what is to become of one angry divine person, and another pacifying him, without man doing anything but believing? If the Lord Jesus be Himself King of kings, and Lord of lords, the First and the Last, how can he apply to another Being to forgive man for his sake? The whole of the artificial scheme falls away, and I stand face to face with the One Divine Saviour, who will love me, enlighten me, and help me, but who says, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—Matt. xix. 17.

Keep the commandments, keep the commandments, says the serpent, and pours out a terrible flood indeed. Keep the commandments! why man cannot keep the commandments. Keep the commandments! why that would be going to heaven by your own merits. Keep the commandments! why that would be workmongering! Keep the commandments! why that is doing away with the merit of the Lord's death, with the value of faith,

with all that the learned teachers of faith alone have been insisting upon for hundreds of years. How can you be better than your fathers? Poor feeble beings like you, how can you keep the commandments? And so the outcry, and so the flood, continue. But God takes care to preserve the woman and her child, although only in the wilderness. She is preserved, for a time, with a few. She has not crowds about her. There are only a few. It is a wilderness around. But she keeps the testimony of Jesus Christ and the commandments of God. The dragon, though wroth, can do her no harm.

She has the testimony of Jesus Christ. What a sublime heritage is this!—The testimony of Jesus Christ. For what is the testimony of Jesus Christ? It is the knowledge that in Him God is man, and man is God. It is the testimony that He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the Jesus of the New. It is the testimony that all the prophecies which declared that Jehovah would come into the world as the only Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, have been fulfilled, and “God was indeed in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”—2 Cor. v. 19. It is the testimony that the Everlasting Father, out of love to His creatures, assumed a nature like ours, except that He was its only Father. He caused that Humanity to go through all the temptations of ours, the troubles, the divided states, the sufferings, the death of ours, but purified it, sanctified it, and raised it by His own proper power, so that this glorified Humanity might be for ever the uniting medium between us and our adorable heavenly Father. He in us, and the Father in Him. This is the glorious testimony of Jesus. Jehovah manifest, God with us. The souls of all His children, united to Him as their Creator, Redeemer, and Friend, one with the Father, all having access to the Father by Him, so that He who sees Him sees the Father. Happy, thrice happy, are they who have this testimony of the Father.

While, then, the dragon, consisting of those who despise the religion of life, and rely for salvation on faith alone, are using the dragon's claws vigorously, and sending out most copious floods of falsehood to destroy the New Church and its new doctrine, its members are protected by the Lord, and feel quite safe; they have the testimony of Jesus; and what a delightful and consolatory testimony is that. It is the assurance that the Lord they love is not only the Lord of all, in whose hand are all things in heaven and on earth, but that He is their loving and instant defence. He is with them always (Matt. xxviii.) He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and however all spiritual and earthly antagonists may assail, He who is the Lion and the

Lamb will overcome, for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. xvii. 16).

But, besides this testimony which they have, "they keep the commandments of God."—Ver. 17. The dragon is most bitter upon this very subject. He has an intense antipathy to keeping the commandments. He cannot see how persons can keep the commandments without supposing they have merit therein. He cries out, Those who keep the commandments are going to heaven by their works, and are dishonouring their Saviour. But the very reverse of all this is true, and the faithful ones who keep the commandments are they who know that it is true. While they neglected the keeping of God's commandments they could easily suppose they had merit, for then self ruled them, and the love of self can make a merit of anything. Those who are in faith alone fancy there is great merit in being of their faith, and look disdainfully upon others. But the men who strive to do the Lord's will by a just and loving life, by a merciful spirit and a virtuous walk with God, these discover their short-comings fully, and know there is no merit in them. They know that all the good they do is from the Lord Jesus, and because they are branches in Him, the living vine. Instead of dishonouring the Saviour by endeavouring to do good works by power from Him, they cannot express their feeling of sadness at the dishonour put upon Him by the members of the dragon, when they pretend that although Jehovah gave His commandments for man's good, and then came into the world to save mankind from their spiritual enemies, and lived, and died, and rose again, to enable man to serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life, that yet all this has failed, and man cannot yet keep the commandments. But they know better. They know that they may begin imperfectly; by looking to the Lord in urgent holy prayer and steady practice, they will acquire daily new power to love Him more and serve Him better. They are sure the apostle's words are true: "This is the love of God, that ye keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." Let us in this spirit obey, my brethren, and we shall know that he who dwells in this love dwells in God, for "God is love."

The earth, too, we are assured, will help the woman (ver. 16). And this, we can easily perceive, will certainly be a fact. The earth represents the earthly; those external men who do not yet trouble themselves about heavenly things, but who can appreciate goodness in the life. These discern the effects which follow the religion of enlightened charity, of loving and doing

what is right in all things. They mark also religion of faith only, which leaves the roots of evil where they were, but glosses them over with pious usages and pious conversation. The men of no religious profession have no respect for the zealots of faith, but much regard for the doers of good. Whenever they are called upon to judge between the two, the earth will help the woman. The bigotted professor of a narrow faith assails with virulence and bitterness the children of the New Dispensation: but if they truly live out their principles of love to their heavenly Father and Saviour, and of obedience to His laws; of love to their neighbour, irrespective of name, class, or creed, carried out in trustful obedience to the laws of God; in the Word and in nature ever trusting in the right, faithful to truth, upright and kind; not only will they have the smile of heaven, but also the earth will help the woman. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

SERMON XXXIII.

THE DESCENT OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

“And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”—Rev. xxi. 2.

WE have now a most beautiful subject before us—the descent of the New Jerusalem. When tired of the turmoils of the present, when weary of the strife and contention of a time of care, conflict, and trouble, how delightful it is to look up and hear, from the blessed source of all progression, “Behold, I make all things new.”—Rev. xxi. 5. All things—science, literature, arts, philosophies, commerce, trade, intercourse between countries and provinces, and above all, in religion—all things will be made NEW. In religion, say some, that is impossible! How can there be anything new in religion? But why not? Look around. Do you see any religion so perfect that it cannot be improved? Is everything so clear in doctrine that there is nothing to be explained? Do you understand the Word of God so plainly that a divine radiance covers every page? Have you no doubts, no difficulties, whose obscurities you desire to have made clear? Would not new motives to help men to be better be a blessing to mankind? Has the Lord’s kingdom come yet? Is His will done on earth as it is done in heaven yet? Would not a more perfect knowledge of the Lord’s will, and how it is done in heaven, help us to do it better on earth, and thus prepare for heaven? Ponder over these questions, and, in the meantime, listen to the angel who said to the beloved John, “Come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”—Ver. 9. No one who reads the prophecies with even ordinary attention can imagine that the world is now what it is intended to become, or what All-seeing Wisdom has declared it will become. Not a quarter of the population of the earth are Christian even in name. Not a hundredth part of these are striving to become so in reality. Of those who are striving, how few see their way clear, and un-

doubtingly walk on in the path of purity, content, and peace. Surely this is not the fulfilment of what God has promised. There must be a grander future for mankind than this present tossed, troubled, and bewailing state. Let us hope, and let us listen.

“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,” says the prophet Isaiah, “as the waters cover the sea.”—Chap. xi. 9. But of the believers of what is commonly called Christianity, who knows the Lord? who professes to know Him? It is said His nature is mysterious, and beyond the possibility of knowing. The Father is incomprehensible, the Son is incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost is incomprehensible. If all the world could be persuaded to believe that, it would still not be covered with the knowledge of the Lord. There must be a clearer explanation of divine things vouchsafed to man, or this prophecy can never be fulfilled; and this has been undoubtedly promised. “The time cometh when I will shew you plainly of the Father.”—John xv. 25.

The prophet says, again, “Violence shall no more be heard in the land; wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls SALVATION and thy gates PRAISE.”—Chap. lx. 18. Again, “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—Chap. ii. 4. But, when shall this be? It has never yet been.

And when we see the religions of the nations of Christendom each praying for the success of the arms of their Governments against other nations equally Christian with themselves, and returning thanks that their enemies have been overcome and slaughtered, we can hardly think that this is the bright and holy revelation of the Divine Will, which will strike the sword from the oppressor’s hand, and teach the nations not to learn war any more.

Oh, no! this new golden age belongs to a more interior Christianity than earth has yet received. An inner city for the soul, which was imaged by that which John saw, a golden city and a crystal one, descending from the Lord out of heaven, a New Church, the Bride, the Lamb’s wife. Some are startled when they hear of a New Church. Yet nothing can be plainer than that such a church was in due time to be given to men. Jerusalem, in the Scriptures, signifies the Church; a New Jerusalem must therefore mean a New Church.

It is well known to the reader of the Scriptures that the Jerusalem of the Jews was the type of the Church. It was not

for its own sake, nor for the sake of the Jews as a small peculiar nation, that such minute regulations were given about the sacrifices, and worship, and feasts of Jerusalem. Glorious things were spoken of her as the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High, but it was not for herself, but for that Church of which she was the shadow. Her name was given of the Divine Providence. The name Jebus (he who contemns), which she was formerly called, was changed to Jerusalem (the sight of peace), because in this, as in everything else, she was the emblem of the church which alone gives a sight of the Prince of Peace, of the principles of peace, and of that peaceful home of all the good hereafter. Hence, the Church is the true Jerusalem, the city of peace.

The prophetic declarations of the Old Testament can only be understood when they speak of Jerusalem as meaning the inward city of God, the Church. The coming of the Lord is always represented as a great blessing for Jerusalem, and yet it is certain that for the outward Jerusalem it was only the precursor of destruction. The Lord said of that Jerusalem, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." When the prophet saw in spirit the Lord coming into and saving the world, he said, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."—Isa. lii. 1. Again, "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem."—Ver. 9. The Lord redeemed His church, and made her a holy city, into which the unclean should not enter; but the outward capital of the Jews was spiritually Sodom and Egypt (Rev. xi. 8). The apostle draws the distinction very plainly between the outward and the inward Jerusalem in the epistle to the Galatians, "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, and is the mother of us all."—Chap. iv. 25, 26. The same Jerusalem, he speaks of, when he is describing the blessedness of those who become truly Christians, "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 firstborn, which are written in heaven."—Heb. xii. 22, 23. Here it is clearly declared that the heavenly Jerusalem is the CHURCH.

There can be no doubt the apostle is speaking in the same style, when he observes, "For he is not a Jew, which is one out-

wardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God."—Rom. ii. 28, 29. Outward Jerusalem, with its people, its rites, and shadows, no longer stood in the divine sight as His Church. An inward city was formed, a spiritual Jerusalem. This was the city of God, the true Jerusalem, the real Church. The Saviour from His cross proclaimed of the church of types, "It is finished." Another city was set on the hill (Matt. v.); a city whose buildings and foundation were of God, an inward Jerusalem, whose citizens were all those who loved the Lord Jesus as their King, and obeyed His laws here in His lower kingdom, that they may be prepared for the high glories of His upper kingdom in heaven. Jerusalem, then, we may clearly see, in the prophecies and the New Testament, means the Church, and that being admitted, the consequence must be that the New Jerusalem in the prophetic book of the Revelations must mean a New Church. The magnificent city beheld in spirit by John was a grand symbol of the future new and glorious Church which would bless the earth.

It would descend from God out of heaven. Many persons look for a continued progression of the human race, and a high state of civilization and excellence at some remote period to be attained, but brought about by science and reason unaided. But the divine record gives us a different and a far better assurance. It is to descend from God, the Father of His people, and the Author of all good, out of heaven. Human self-sufficiency would often desire to originate improvements and be its own Saviour, but man is only a receiver. He can only improve by receiving what God in mercy offers. They who receive the Gospel were elevated and saved by it, and they who receive the New Jerusalem may walk in its light and be happy, but it must never be forgotten it descends from God. It does not originate with man.

The idea of mere literalists that an actual city of the dimensions named is to come down from God out of heaven is too extravagant to be entertained by reason for a moment. The city is said to be four square,—that is, its length, breadth, and height are equal; and the measure is twelve thousand furlongs,—that is, fifteen hundred miles. But who can conceive that a city of gold fifteen hundred miles high is to come down through the air? Can any one imagine such a city, and this to be surrounded by a wall one hundred and forty-four cubits,—that is, seventy-two yards high? Besides, where would it descend to, and upon what?

Our island, the largest in Europe, would be many times too small for its reception. By these considerations, as well as by the general law in relation to spiritual sights, that they are to be compared with spiritual things, we may know that a New Jerusalem is a New Church, especially as to its doctrine. Doctrine is like a city, because it defends the soul, as a city, by its walls, defends the body. We may, however, be met at the outset of our endeavour to shew that revelation teaches that there is to be a New Church, and that it has already begun, as all divine works do, in an infantile state, with the objection that the New Jerusalem did not descend until John had "seen the former heaven and the former earth pass away, and a new heaven and earth begin."—Ver. 1. And that, therefore, a New Jerusalem is not to be expected until we have altogether a new world. But this objection goes entirely on the error that the terms heaven and earth, when describing moveable and changing heavens and earth, mean in the Scriptures what they mean in science. This is, however, not the case. Heaven and earth mean society in the world as to its inward principles, and its outward life and institutions. When men suffer the Lord to form their minds within by new heavenly principles, He is said to create new heavens. When they reject the holy truths of religion and cherish the dark and false persuasions of self-derived intelligence, it is said "the heavens have no light."—Jer. iv. 23. We have examples of the first kind in the words of the prophet, "I have put my words into thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."—Isa. li. 16. The heavens that the Lord plants by putting His Word into the mouth of His people, can only be the heavenly principles which bring peace here and prepare for heaven hereafter. When the Lord came into the world and planted the kingdom of God within men, as He said (Luke xvii. 20, 21), it is foretold by the prophet in similar terms to those used by John, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."—Isa. lxxv. 17, 18. To alter the state of society altogether, both as to its principles and practice, is to change heaven and earth. "If any man be in Christ," said Paul, "he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."—2 Cor. v. 17. And, indeed, when this happy change takes place with any one individually, he feels all things to have a new face

and a new reality for him. His view of the Lord is altogether bright and new, where it had before been dark and threatening. His thoughts, his hopes, his prospects, are altogether confident and cheerful, and his outward life is new and virtuous. Creation smiles upon him with a new face. The fool's paradise which made his former heaven, and the evil, wretched mixture of sinning and remorse which formed his conduct, has all passed away, and there is for him a new heaven and a new earth. And there is no more sea. Or, there is no more of that external, natural, turmoiling thought, which consisted of masses of knowledge and masses of care and anxiety, but all external. The wicked are like a troubled sea (Isa. xlviii. 22). All this, however, is done away with when the mind and life are made new. So is it with an individual, and so is it with all society. To indicate this, then, and not to tell of destruction and annihilation in God's fair and universe, John saw in vision the former heaven and former earth passing away, and a new heaven and a new earth appearing. While, then, change was coming over society in all other respects, in the feelings, thoughts, and outward life of men, there would also be given to the world a new doctrine from heaven which would constitute a New Church. This is the New Jerusalem. And may we not look around now, and ask, Is it not so? Has not society, even now, immensely changed? Where are the old bigotted principles which taught men to go out and persecute, and even destroy others, in the name of God? Where are all the old maxims which taught each nation to regard others as their natural enemies, and to injure and destroy their power and their trade as a patriotic act and a duty? Where are the selfish maxims which confined power and privilege to a few to whom all others should slavishly bend? These are all gone, or rapidly going; and, instead of their unholy reign, we see constantly advanced and constantly extending sentiments of brotherhood, of reverential remembrance that we are all children of One who is our Father and our Saviour. Every year the mutual intercourse of nations, and the goodwill which is its attendant, are extending, and, aided by the victorious march of steam and telegraph, will, no doubt, ere long unite all nations in the ties of mutual love. Though still the horrid wickedness of national war is witnessed even in Christendom, yet it is not entered into as formerly with zest. Vast numbers lament it, protest against it, go about it with regret and apologies, evidently feeling within that men were not made to produce hell upon earth, but to make a paradise for each other. O, may this spirit rapidly increase—

“On, spirit of blessedness, on,
 And gladden each valley and hill,
 And, oh, let each hamlet, and city, and town,
 Be bright with thy radiance still.
 Let wisdom, and virtue, and freedom, and worth,
 Enrich each sweet spot of the beautiful earth.”

All the appliances of art, of science, and of business are new, or being renovated. The whole face of society is being changed. Our modes of travel are entirely remodelled, and all in the direction of bringing the blessings of all to each. Education is advancing with rapid strides. Books, newspapers, letters, are being multiplied with marvellous rapidity. Ignorance will ere long, we rejoice to say, be as rare an exception as, fifty years ago, knowledge was. A new heaven and a new earth are, indeed, appearing. And now, therefore, is the time that the New Jerusalem may be expected. A New Church under that name has certainly begun, but is it the Church intended in our text? This is a serious question. Let us examine and compare.

The New Jerusalem of our text has many marks. We will select four prominent ones. First, It is the bride, the Lamb's wife (ver. 2, 10). Secondly, It is a golden city (ver. 18). Thirdly, It is clear, like unto clear glass (ver. 18). Fourthly, It is four square: the length, the breadth, and the height of it are equal (ver. 16). And, lastly, it has twelve gates: on the east three gates, on the west three gates, on the south three gates, and on the north three gates (ver. 13). If these marks of the New Church represented to the eyes of John's spirit shall be found to be descriptive of precisely the same principles, doctrines, and states as distinguish the New Jerusalem Church now begun among mankind, we shall not be presumptuous in saying, the prophecy is in these days fulfilled.

First, then, the New Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. In the Old Testament Jehovah is said to be the husband of His church (Isa. liv. 5). For thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord (Jehovah) of Hosts is His name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall He be called. The New Jerusalem would regard the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the same light as Jehovah was required to be regarded among the Jews, as the God of the whole earth. To be the husband is to be the support, the strength, the ruler, the only one loved supremely with all the heart. There can only be one such for the church to be a true bride and wife. Hence, this mark of the New Jerusalem implies that in this church the Lord Jesus Christ would be the only object of adoration, love, and worship. This entire devotion of the soul to Him is implied in being His wife. And if the last best church will so regard Him,

it will follow that such is the truth. In fact, now we can see that this has always been taught in the Word, and we wonder that men have passed it by unperceived. Isaiah proclaimed that there was no Saviour but Jehovah. "The Lord (Jehovah) is our judge, the Lord (Jehovah) is our lawgiver, the Lord (Jehovah) is our king; He will save us."—Isa. xxxiii. 22. He who came into the world as the Son was proclaimed to be the "Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace," Isa. ix. 6. The attention of the world was called to the One God of Israel as the Source of all good. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."—Chap. xlv. 22. "Before Me was there no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord (Jehovah), and beside Me there is no Saviour."—Chap. xlv. 10, 11. In the New Testament we are told that "Jesus was God with us," Matt. i. 23. "God manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. "God over all, blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5. "He who seeth Him seeth the Father," John xiv. 9. "He and the Father are one," John x. 30. "So that all that the Father hath is His," John xvi. "And in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" Col. ii. 9. "He is the First and the Last," Rev. i. 17. "The Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending; who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty," Rev. i. 8. "The King of kings and Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 16.

But this truth so directly taught, has not, for ages, been abidingly acknowledged in the church. The divinity of the Lord's Humanity has never been clearly brought out and placed as the central truth in the church, as it is in heaven. It is the Divine Humanity that is the Lamb. It is the Divine Lamb. It is the innocence and wisdom of God embodied in human form. We can communicate with God in that form, but not with an incomprehensible essence. He can be in us, and the Father in Him. The Lamb has been slain, in a higher sense than that of crucifying His body. The divinity of His Humanity has been rejected since the foundation of the church, the world, in a spiritual sense. But the angels have adored Him in His Divine Humanity. They have said, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"—Rev. v. 12; and the New Jerusalem would take up this adoring strain, and diffuse it over the earth. God, before He assumed the Humanity, had communicated with His creatures by angels, Heb. ii. 2, and by prophets, Heb. i. 1, these were mere creatures themselves, and were not to be adored, but when He assumed, and glorified

the only-begotten Son, He said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."—Heb. i. 6. Unto the Son He said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."—Ver. 8. This Divine Humanity, therefore, begotten and glorified of the Father, is the Lamb, and the New Jerusalem would be the Lamb's wife. She would regard the Human of Jehovah as the Divine Man, full of all the glories of the Godhead, and saying, "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. xi. 26. "No one knoweth the Father save the Son, and He to whom the Son will reveal Him."—Ver. 27. Well, there is now a church which regards the Lord Jesus in this light, as the only God of heaven and earth; as the Creator from eternity, the Redeemer in time, and the Regenerator for ever. The prophecy and the fulfilment seem complete. The New Jerusalem, John foresaw, would be the Lamb's wife. The New Jerusalem which has begun is the Lamb's wife. The first mark is fully recognized.

Secondly: The city would be a golden one. Gold is the emblem of the highest love: love to the Lord. "I counsel thee," said the Lord Jesus to the church of Philadelphia, "to buy of me fine gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."—Rev. iii. 18. That the city was pure gold, was to teach us by this beautiful sign, that this church would have all its doctrines and practice grounded in pure love. And when we examine the church of the New Jerusalem, now actually begun, we cannot but acknowledge that this mark is fully borne out. The ground of all her teaching respecting the Lord is, "God is love." From love He created us; from love He redeemed us; from love He watches over and regenerates us. It is His love that diffuses a sphere of blessedness through heaven. It is His love which marks the sparrow's fall, and leaves not a hair of the head unnumbered. What love will do in any case God will do, for He is almighty love. The Word is God's love, teaching by wisdom. It is His love drawn out. Again, love is the soul of all religion. Love leads to man's forgiveness; love believes; love keeps the commandments; love bears with patience; love hopes; love adores; love enters heaven and strikes its golden harp; love is the fulfilling of the law. So teaches the New Church; and is she not, then, rightly represented as a golden city? This second mark is then equally clear to be seen on the New Church as the First.

Thirdly: The city was clear as glass. Her light is said to be clear as crystal (Ver. 11). "The nations of them which are

saved shall walk in the light of it."—Ver. 24. Now, if there is one thing which more than another in the New Church as now begun, it is that it is clear. Subjects that have hitherto been most mysterious are made clear. Where darkness has held her sway there is complete light. It is recorded of some poor captives of the Bastile and other prisons, that they have become so used to their confinement, that they have shrunk from the enjoyment of the light and the freedom of earth, and asked to remain in their cell. And so we find it often with mental prisoners. They fear to embrace the principles of the New Jerusalem, they are so clear. They have been accustomed to think all must be mysterious and perplexing in the doctrines of religion, and therefore they are afraid of a system which makes all clear. Yet that was to be the characteristic of the New Jerusalem. "The city would be clear as glass." This church would let the light of heaven in, fearlessly, yes, lovingly. Children love the light; and the members of this church, children of the Lord Jesus, the light of the world, desire to walk in His truth: to have its clearness within them and around them.

The divine Trinity, so long the dark centre of old Christianity, is now made beautifully clear. Who cannot understand the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in one Divine Person, like the soul, body, and works, in one human person, the image of the Lord. This Trinity is so clear, we see it represented everywhere. It is like the heat, light, and radiation of the sun; the essence, form, and fragrance of a flower; the length, breadth, and depth of a grain of dust. Everything in creation is three in one. The same clearness exists in that other mysterious doctrine, the doctrine of the atonement. We are not perplexed with the idea of two divine persons, one angry and the other merciful, and yet both alike; we are not puzzled with the effort to find out why one demanded a sacrifice and the two others did not; why the justice of the first demanded the death of the second, and the justice of the other two made no such demand. The doctrine in the New Jerusalem is altogether clear. It was our heavenly Father Himself who saved us. In His love and in His pity He redeemed us. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."—2 Cor. v. 18. He redeemed us from the powers of hell because He loves us, and He saves us from our sins, Matt. i. 21. The Holy Spirit is His Spirit dwelling in us, to enlighten, to purify, to console, and to bless us. "The Lord is that Spirit."—2 Cor. iii. 17.

Come we to the life of religion; it is to shun evil, and do
 ~1. The commandments of the Lord are the standard of evil

and good: keep them from love, in spirit and in act, and your mind will become formed for heaven.

Do you wish to know what heaven is? It is the company of loving and wise souls, made perfect by regeneration, as far as their states will admit, and filled and surrounded with peace, joy, and beauty from the Lord. The kingdom of God essentially is within you. Is not this clear? Try it; you will realize heaven at home. Do you ask what hell is? It is the congregation of the bad, filled with lusts and passions, hating and tormenting each other, and abounding in all that is impure, wretched, and unholy. Do not the same impurities make hell here? Are not the wicked miserable here, and can they be otherwise so long as they cherish the causes of misery? The same laws which prevail on earth prevail after death, but produce their effects more perfectly and more immediately. That world is a spirit-world, and all its movements are ruled with the rapidity and certainty of thought. All this is surely clear; and do we ask who shall enable us to live the life which leads to heaven? the answer is simple—the Lord Jesus; He who sanctified Himself, that we might be sanctified; He who invites us to receive Him in heart, and soul, and love. “He who eateth me, shall live by me.”

Oh, what calls to love, to virtue, and to trust, are made upon us in this clear view of our God, of His merciful dealings of ourselves, and the life of religion; and, lastly, of that pure state of bliss for which this world is to prepare us.

But, fourthly: The city is four-square. The length, the breadth, and the height of it are equal. There are three grand things in religion, love, faith, and works, all of them, in the Word, declared essential to salvation. Without love there is nothing that can dispose the soul to have faith; it is love that believes. Without love and faith there can be no good works; for either no works will be done, if we do not love to do them, or if works be done they will not be from the heart, and will therefore be constrained or hypocritical, and therefore not good. Religion has often overlooked this essential condition of things, and only insisted upon faith as essential to salvation.

“Believe, and all your sins forgiven;
Only believe, and your's is heaven.”

Salvation by faith, without works, has been supposed to be the essence of the Gospel. Hence, men have been built up only on one side, and it has been imagined that their faith would be

all that would be measured in the judgment. It is amazing that a system so plainly opposed to the account of judgment, as given in the Gospel, could ever have found acceptance among those who have constantly been told by the Lord, "That He will judge every man according to his works." They have built up their city only on one side, and enemies of every kind have entered and laid it waste on others. Hence, Christianity has been preached, but evil practised, on every hand. There have been Christian invaders of countries, Christian slave-makers, Christian persecutors, Christian extortioners, Christian doers of almost every evil, when it suited them, but blindly expecting to be saved, because they imagined their faith was right. It will not be so in the New Jerusalem. The measure of the city is equal. Examine its faith, and it is a loving trust in all that the Lord has taught, or shall further disclose as true. Examine its love, and it is a holy glow of affection to the Lord supremely, and to man as his immortal child. Examine its works, and they will be found to consist in daily obedience to the divine commandments, from faith and love. Each great Christian grace is cultivated and insisted upon as equally essential. Where one is, the other two are. A man cannot have love alone. If he really love God, he will really believe Him, and will really obey Him. A man cannot have faith alone. If he really have faith he will do what faith teaches. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." A man cannot have good works alone. If he work at all it must be from some love, and if he do real good works they must be from a good love. And a real good love will seek for truth to guide it, in what it does. One Christian grace, sincerely held, involves the others. It cannot exist alone. This is seen in the New Jerusalem, and hence it inculcates the trinity of Christian graces, love, faith, works, as all alike essential to the religious character. The length, breadth, and height of the city are equal. Length is the measurement in the direction of the sun's course, and is expressive of the degree we advance in goodness. Breadth is the measurement from north to south, and indicates the expansion of truth and views of wisdom over the mind, while height is indicative of the holiness derived from the Lord, and descending into the life, giving elevation and purity. These, in the New Jerusalem, are equal. And, oh, may it be the effort of us all to have these principles equal in us. Faith without love is bitter and false; love without faith is weak and blind; and works without both are hypocritical, wicked, or dead. But faith

and love, producing virtue, are the genuine principles of religion. In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but "faith working by love."

Lastly: The New Jerusalem has gates on every side. On the east three gates, on the west three gates, on the south three gates, and on the north three gates. The different quarters represent the different states of the mind. The east is where the sun rises, and those whose hearts are affected by love to the Lord are represented as in the east. Having three gates on the east signifies that there are introductory truths meant by gates, which are especially adapted for the reception of those who supremely love the Lord. While the principles of the New Jerusalem unfold the loveliness of the divine character, the matchless wisdom of the Lord and His adorable virtue, the hearts of his loving servants burn within them. There are three gates for them. On the west there are three gates, to signify that for those who are in little good, with whom the Sun of righteousness is going down and almost setting, there are truths accommodated to their state. They can be assured of the divine mercy, and learn to repent. The way for them is made very simple. To shun evil, especially the sin which most easily besets them, and do the opposite good, is their only course. Look to the Saviour for strength. Trust not in self, but trust in Him who has said, "Whosoever will come unto me I will in no wise cast out." The knowledges of charity, faith, and good works, as applicable to them, are the three gates on the west side.

The south is where the sun is when his light is greatest, when his mid-day splendour extends the widest over the horizon, and they whose minds are in the greatest illumination are in the south. That there are on the south three gates, is the assurance that the doctrines of the New Jerusalem are adapted to the most highly intellectual. The simplest can comprehend their simple elements, but the grander truths will elicit the interest and excite the admiration of the most commanding minds. To trace the Divine Providence in all His dealings, to unfold the Word in its sublime depths, and to enter into the wonders of regeneration, are exercises which will engage the profoundest intellects. For them there are on the south three gates: and even on the north there are three gates. Those who are in the least light, and so beset with the fogs of ignorance as to be still in the simplicity of mere children, will find gates adapted to them. To be thankful to the Lord for every blessing, to do their daily work from a spirit of religion, and to avoid sin as an offence against God;

these things the least intellectual can grasp, and the New Jerusalem has three gates to receive those who approach from the north. Men of all nations and conditions, men of all talents and attainments, men of all churches and superstitions, will find the love and the light which they need, in this New Church. The Roman Catholic will find that universality of love, and that infallibility of truth which he has vainly sought in his own church, given in the gold and crystal clearness of the New Jerusalem. The Protestant will find that reverence for the Bible, which is his glory, still more heightened, while the wonders of its spiritual sense are explored, and he finds it a fountain of wisdom, not for men only, but also for angels. The Hindoo will find in the New Jerusalem the origin of all the emblems, which, though now polluted by idolatry, were at first full of sacred meaning. The Unitarian and the Jew will find in this Church their One God in essence and in Person adored, free from any rival, but made so known in the blessed person of Jesus, the First and the Last, that we can abide in Him and He in us. It is the Lord God Almighty whose glory is the light of the holy city, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof (ver. 23). There is no curse there; where its principles prevail, all is blessing. The throne of God and the Lamb is in the city, and His servants serve Him. They see His face, and His name is in their foreheads (chap. xxii. 4, 5. She is the Lamb's wife; He is her husband, and in Him is the Father.

She is not only, however, the bride, but a bride adorned for her husband. All her doctrines, and all she knows of the eternal world, are not only useful and true, but beautiful. Each doctrine is a precious stone of itself. Each gate is a pearl. The abundance of revelations which this Church possesses concerning the eternal world, adorns her with loveliness of the most delightful character, taking away the chill of the grave and the ghastliness of death. O that men knew how truly this system is indeed a magnificent city, descended from God out of heaven. But, oh, may they be induced to learn its worth, and to enter it, by witnessing the purity and peace of its inhabitants. May a prayer go up from every heart within its pure precincts, to be made to walk worthy of its holy principles, that we may be gifted with the privilege of being heralds to others of the light, the glory, and the good of this holy city of our God. The spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.

Q. what a hope and a blessing for mankind are unfolded by

the descent of this city of God. To those who enter it the perplexities of ages are ended. Enmity gives way to love, anxiety to trust, and crime to virtue. God in His divine humanity dwells with men. The tabernacle of God is that Holy Temple of which He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But He spake of the temple of His body."—John ii. 19, 21. The tabernacle of God is with men. He dwells with them in His Glorified Humanity. He is in them, and the Father in Him. They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."—Ver. 3, 4.

There shall be no more death. That is, no more those deadly evils which destroy the soul. No more those hateful passions which destroy peace, those malignant lusts which pollute the spirit and engender hell. "To be carnally minded is death."—Rom. viii. 6. Life, beginning with the Divine Love, which is life itself; life, the life of Christian love, flowing through the whole mind; life, the life of doing good, shall pervade the inhabitants of this blessed city. Their perceptions of truth shall be trees of life; the Word shall be to them a river of the water of life. Everything—the arts, the sciences, the philosophies, the literature of this society, shall all breathe that pure love which is the life of heaven. "He that liveth and believeth in Me," said the Lord Jesus, "shall never die."—John xi. 26. He will still have the privilege of passing into the eternal world; but this is not dying, it is rising to a more perfect life. There shall be no more separation from God and His Infinite Love. There shall be no more sorrow from fear of hell; no more wailing from loss of truth; no more the pain of burdened, irksome labour, for labour will be lost in love. The likeness of heaven will be seen upon earth, and man truly be an incipient angel. O, may we resolve to enter this glorious city and live by its laws now. Its influence is small yet, but it will extend in every way until its blessed principles do, indeed, throw a golden atmosphere of blessedness and peace around all the families of earth, and the hopes and the prayers of the wise and good of every age are completed. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven even so upon the earth."

The tendency of all things manifestly is to the realization of these glorious things for the future. Education is advancing, with astonishing strides, to the destruction of ignorance. The tone and character of the education, also, is being heightened.

The bringing out of the good affections is now the acknowledged supreme object of education, and books are being rapidly produced to aid in this great work, the noblest work of man. For surely, of all aims, the highest is that of making one great family of brothers and sisters of the whole human race, with the everlasting Father as the one Divine Head, with all the appliances and comforts of earth at their service; and such an advance in all the elevating influences of religion, and reason, and science, that the angels can sing over a fully redeemed world, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

"All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail;
Returning justice lift aloft her scale;
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed innocence from heaven descend.
No sigh, no murmur, the wide world shall hear,
From every face God wipes off every tear."

SERMON XXXIV.

THE

BLESSEDNESS OF KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."—Rev. xxii. 14.

THE commandments of God are the laws of happiness. They are the rules of health both for soul and body. There can be no well-being on earth, and no heaven without them. Oh, for the eloquence of an angel to set forth this truth, for we are persuaded, until men are won to see the blessedness of keeping the commandments, the world will not come into the love of goodness for its own sake, and the abhorrence of evil for its inherent viciousness, which form the true spirit of real religion.

We have too long been in the habit of thinking that goodness is only good because God has commanded it, and evil would be good, or at least very pleasant, if it had not been forbidden. We have not regarded goodness as the indispensable means of happiness, just as much as breath is to life, labour to success, or water to steam. But this is really the state of the case. The commandments are the laws of goodness. They are summed up by our Lord in the New Testament into two. He was asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" And it is written, "Jesus said unto him, 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."—Matt. xxii. 36—40. Here are the essential laws of happiness. Society constituted upon them must be happy. Let love to God fill the heart, inspire the intellect, and pervade every thought, and we walk as the friends of the Lord. We exult in our Heavenly Father's goodness. We look above, and the heavens

declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work. We look around on the beauteous earth, and while its green carpet, its flowery gems, and its luxuriant fruits so bounteously bestowed, attract our admiration, the delighted Christian exclaims, My Father made them all. When we love the Lord we have no fears. Perfect love casteth out fear. We love His laws, and do them joyously. We view the earth as His outer palace, and walk with Him as His children. We are connected by a golden circle with the Fountain of happiness and light; love, peace, and joy descend into us as a copious stream. "O, that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments!" said the Lord, "then would thy peace have been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isa. xlviii. 18.

The Lord is to the soul like the sun to the solar system. From Him comes the warmth, the brightness, and the fertility which beautify and bless the soul. It is as vain to expect a bright or a happy mind where love to God is not, as to expect a bright or a cheerful world without the sun. The love of God in the soul turns it to its proper centre, and enables it to receive from Him the deep groundwork of every blessing. When the Divine Spirit diffuses itself over the heart, it fills it with delight through every fibre. It is as when the sun rises in majestic glory and warms every mountain and hill, plain and valley. The forests wave in His brightness, the stream glitters like silver in His beams; all nature seems glad. To Him every bud owes its life, every flower its beauty, every fruit its substance. Without Him the world sinks into gloom; and could He be altogether abstracted from creation, all life and fertility on this earth would expire, and only a stiff, stark, cold, withered mass would remain. Just so essential is God's love and wisdom to man. And hence, the divine command is not an arbitrary decree. It is the condition of our well-being. Nothing can dispense with it. Hence, Moses said, "Ye shall command your children to observe to do all the words of this law, for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life."—Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

Indeed, without the Divine Love flowing into man he would cease to exist. It descends upon the evil and upon the good, upon the just and the unjust alike. But the inwardly obstinate and corrupt elevate some impure idol of their own into the interiors of their hearts, and then the divine love flowing through this is perverted and polluted. Hence, man obtains a defiled life in which all that is beautiful and blessed dies, and a horrid brood of evil passions and evil phantasies take their place. Hence it is that the commandments take the negative form so much, even in

relation to God. If idolatry, interior and exterior, be avoided, the blessed Spirit of the Lord will flow in, and with it every joy.

Let us consider a little in detail the commandments in relation to God. But first let us notice that they are addressed to those who have come out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And, in the literal sense, the Jews undoubtedly were intended to be so designated, in reference to their national deliverance. But, as the commandments were by our Lord made the universal law, we must regard the introduction in its spiritual sense. And in this sense Israel in Egypt, groaning in bondage, are the symbols of every man in his unregenerate state. "The city where our Lord was crucified was spiritually Sodom and Egypt."—Rev. xi. 8. In the evil man all holy and virtuous principles are enslaved; they are only suffered to murmur as the dictates of an oppressed conscience. Lusts, passions, and conceits are free to licentiousness, but all that has been stored up from angels and from teachers is in captivity. When the soul, wearied with the tyranny of sin, receives the help offered by its Saviour, He proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-house to them that were bound. He strikes the fetters from the slave of his sins, and gives to His delivered servant the glorious liberty of the children of light. None but these can keep the commandments, or desire to do so. Hence, they are addressed to such. And the Lord says, "I am the Lord (Jehovah) thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—Ex. xx. 2. The Lord thy God is expressive of the Divine Love and Wisdom, as we have frequently shewn. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me, teaches that only the Divine Love and Wisdom in the person of our adorable Saviour should be worshipped and adored. We say in the Divine Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He only sets the spirit free. "Without Him we can do nothing."—John xv. 5. He is the inconceivable Jehovah brought to view in the mild, but all-powerful, lustre of a Divine Man. "No man cometh unto the Father," He says, "but by Me." We can find the Lord our God nowhere else but in the manifested God. "For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."—Col. ii. 9.

But, an objection will sometimes arise, are we not offending against this commandment in viewing God as a Divine Man? when it is said, we are not to make unto ourselves any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. We would, however, observe that the commandment for-

bids us to make a graven image, or any likeness of anything in the heavens, earth, or water, to bow down ourselves to, or to serve them, but it does not forbid us to adore the Divine Person in which God was pleased to manifest Himself. We do not make a likeness of Him. He makes the likeness of Himself in us as we read the Word with faith and reverence. The Son was the very form of God (Heb. i. 2), manifested for the very purpose of leaving us under no doubt as to His Being and character in all respects. That form was the form of Infinite Benevolence, Wisdom, and Mercy. "And thus He is to us the Way, the Truth, and the Life."—John xiv. 6. He assumed and glorified the Human Nature, and ascended with it high above all heavens, that He might fill all things (Eph. iv. 10). There He is the real Sun of righteousness, with healing in His wings (Mal. iv. 2). He fills all the heavens with light, and love, and joy.

Before this adorable Person angels and men ought to worship. He is the First and the Last. He who comes to Him will find rest unto his soul. He will be healed of whatsoever mental disease he has, and thenceforward feed for ever on the Bread of Life. But if, instead of reverently adoring Him, we frame from self-derived intelligence some other idea of God, and will not think of Him as He has manifested Himself, we then make a graven image of our own. If we set up some idol of our own, so that it occupies the centre of our active minds, we make likenesses of something in the heavens, and place them where the heavenly things themselves ought to be.

Self-love is a baleful mock-sun which shuts out the real one, and substitutes for the benign influence of the Blessed One the scorching glare of passion, the dark obstinacy of self-will, and in some the cold, bitter malignancy of secret hate. The moon we fabricate is a specious web of our own self-conceit, some fancied scheme of mock religion, by which we suppose we escape the grand requirements of religion, and attain heaven without the attainment on earth of a heavenly nature. Such sun and moon are often referred to in the Scriptures. It is said of the seed which fell on stony places, "When the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."—Matt. xiii. 6. Of how many young minds has this been the exact career? They have listened to truth while it fell from the lips of the preacher, but with many obstinate determinations to abide by their own views, which, like stony ground, have hindered the truths of religion from obtaining deep root. Then has come a time when the scorching sun of passionate excitement has

risen upon them, and the good seed has withered away. Of the New Jerusalem, we read, "The city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."—Rev. xxi. 22. The sun and the moon of which the New Church has no need, are the sun and the moon which we ought not to make; but which too many do make self-love instead of God's love, and our self-derived fancies instead of God's wisdom. It is in this way the true sun is darkened, and the moon turned into blood at the end of a church,—self shuts out the Lord, and violated truth shuts out real heavenly light.

A Nero, making his cruel self-will into his god, and worshipping constantly this fearful idol, demands daily a more complete destruction of the happiness and comfort of others at its fearful shrine, until first Christians are persecuted, robbed, and tortured to please him,—then other classes of the state,—then his own relatives are put to death to gratify his demands ever encreasing in cruelty. Still later, Rome, his own capital, is set on fire to please his malignant fancy, and, at last, he wishes the whole Roman people had only one neck that he might destroy them all at one blow. Ambition is a fearful idol. We watch its worshipper giving himself to its absorbing anxieties, to engross all his faculties, to achieve success. He goes through super-human labours. He sets mind, health, life freely at stake. He values thousands, millions of lives, and the welfare of nations at nothing, if this idol demands such sacrifices. He comes possibly to the pinnacle of self-worship, and sees myriads giving their hollow adulation, but his idol becomes so insanely exacting, that his mind, inflamed by insolence, outrages all that mankind value as most sacred, and violated freedom and down-trodden human nature recoil. Nations gather and hem in the raging worshipper of ambition as they would a furious beast. Now mind and body are agitated beyond measure, the brain is on the rack, the passions blaze with the utmost vehemence; frantic exertions are made like the bounds of a chased lion. The judgment, however, has come, and blow after blow falls, until like the Babylonian Belshazzer he dies in the utmost indignity; or, like a modern example, lives on a rocky prison with the vulture of disappointment gnawing daily at his heart. In other instances, the self-worshipper will watch for his opportunity for years, quietly absorbing himself in untold anxieties, accumulating means to his ambitious design. At length, the hour of venture comes. He launches forth his strength, and desolation is the result; but he fails, fails in spite of gigantic exertions, and broken in heart and

health; his passions bring on agonies which prostrate mind and body, and he dies the cruel victim of having made a likeness of things in the heavens, and bowing down to and serving them. But, alas, these passions are not done with at death! The same distorted nature goes into the eternal world, since man takes himself with him, and these fearfully increased by being loosed from earthly bonds, their violence and their folly become still more terrible, and madly impel them onwards to insane cravings, wild efforts, and the miseries within and around which are their necessary results. By day, wild cravings and demoniac plunges; by night, gloom, misery, and doleful sorrow; weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Such is the miserable result of a breach of the first command.

But a person may make likenesses of things on earth, and of things in the waters under the earth, and bow down to and worship them. Instead of loving earthly things, with a true and proper regard derived from the Lord, he may have exaggerated earthly loves, which are the fabricated likenesses of the true, not the true things themselves. He may love his children blindly and dotingly, and make idols of them. He may love any outward possession too well, and make an idol of it. He may feign and simulate outward virtues, too, for selfish ends, and thus set up some image or likeness of his own making, instead of the real orderly principles which the Lord has made. These, when pursued with the chief devotion of the soul, when made the grand objects of the spirit's aim, become idols. The false love of money, that is, the love of it not for its use, in promoting goodness, justice, truth, and general happiness, but the love of it for self-aggrandizement, or simply for its own sake, is a terrible idol at the present day. At its shrine, talent, learning, health, and life, are daily sacrificed. Mammon-worship is a widely extended idolatry. To heap up and make this god larger, is the senseless aim of millions of immortal souls, who toil at that which they must soon certainly leave, and oftentimes break in the sacrifice their health long before their time, and neglect all those riches which could help them in the land to which they go. To this absorbing passion almost every moment is devoted. To pile up the means of procuring food which will never be wanted, clothes which never can be worn, houses which they can never inhabit, is the one engrossing thought. Relatives are despised if they cannot add to the hoard, and viewed with dislike if they have wants which will make them troublesome. Friendship becomes a hollow covering, in which the lust of gain masquerades. And what should be the hearty greeting of a

friend becomes only the awkward leer of a wolfish desire for prey. This prostitution of the mind to a sordid desire for gain in some induces rashness, loss, and despair; in others, deep devotion to cash, untiring calculation, incessant effort, and astounding material success; but with every noble faculty forfeited and prostituted. The man neglected, the animal only cared for, the mind degraded. The merchant has become a millionaire, and is insane. Such is the result of worshipping the likeness of things on the earth.

It is the same when we bow down to and serve an image or likeness of anything in the waters under the earth. Spiritual fish are those appetites for science which delight in the waters of knowledge. The world of thought is a wide sea. The thoughts of the worldly are as a vast troubled sea (Isai. lvii. 20). Only where the glorious river and streams of divine truth flow can the sanctified sciences, the true fish of the soul, really live. The prophet says, "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh."—Ezek. xlvi. 9. The scientific dispositions which we have, when animated by a supreme regard for divine things, subserve the higher kingdom of spiritual and eternal worth and beauty: the region of nature becomes a grand panorama, in which heavenly things are reflected, and wisdom and use are alike illustrated. When, however, science separates itself from God, and exists only as an overweening concern for earthly knowledge: when all the powers of the immortal man are engrossed in weighing atoms, analyzing gases, describing insects, and groping through the by-paths of nature to make himself an illustrious fame: when he dreams that his knowledge is his own, and it will place him above all his compeers, and he will shine in the galaxy of scientific names with everlasting renown, he is then designated, in divine revelation, as a great fish that lies in the midst of his rivers, and says, "My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself."—Ezek. xxix. 3. He has made a perverted and monstrous love of science, and worships it. He becomes an Egyptian or a Philistine in spiritual things, and has a Dagon of his own, and the mind of such a person is a very whirlpool of excitement, vanity, and envy. Not a small history would that be which detailed the sorrows of scientific men when their science has not been made sober and sacred by being subordinated to heavenly wisdom. One eminent man, after waiting in vain for a king's

smile, in France, went and died of chagrin. Another committed suicide because the British Association had not awarded him sufficient honour for his chemical discoveries. And what a world of suffering does such a termination disclose! What long anxieties, yearnings, cares, and miseries, are involved in that long career which finishes in utter despair and recklessness of all things; when all the tender relations and enjoyments of this glorious world are so covered with gall, that the wearied heart plunges away from its poisoned existence in a wild vain attempt to find obliteration and forgetfulness. Oh, self-worship is a bitter thing; it is a bitter thing in any form. Blessed are they who humble themselves and exalt the eternal one: who make themselves poor. They will become rich in God. Only the real Sun should occupy the centre of the soul. When anything else shuts Him out, there is a mental eclipse which chills and darkens the soul. To make life a circle of blessing it must begin and end with God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

To form this first indispensable element for happiness, the Lord, from His infinite love to us, is a jealous God. He requires our worship not for His sake, but ours. He needs nothing of ours, but we need Him. He watches, with unutterable tenderness, to preserve us from the hell of existence in the wild chaos of being in which He is not the supreme centre and the supreme law.

When we view the sad results of suffering ourselves to become self-worshippers in any form, the exclusion that naturally and inevitably follows, of all the felicities of heaven with heavenly purity and peace; the certain introduction of disorder, darkness, and ruin into the soul, with all the misery of being placed in opposition to the laws of God's beautiful world here; and the still more beautiful one hereafter, and all the powers of good, so that what would have given us blessings inflicts upon us pain, we can readily see why the Lord is said to be a jealous God. He is jealous lest we should thus make for ourselves the sources of misery; He made us to be happy, and infinitely desires that we should become so. He is jealous lest we should turn away from Him, the source of life and felicity, and raise up something as an idol which would darken and pervert our existence. He is jealous more than the fondest mother, more than the kindest father, over their offspring, lest it should be seduced from the sweet and salutary influences of home. He is jealous with an infinite and holy jealousy, to preserve each child from danger and from ruin. But He warns us, also, that ruin

to one generation involves danger to the next. In His wisdom He has connected the race together like the links of a chain, so that the progress of one generation may transmit better qualities to another, and thus the race be ever advancing to a higher degree of talent, of order, and happiness. The wealth, mental as well as physical, is thus transmitted to the future generations of mankind. This law, however, when perverted, works in the opposite direction. The iniquity of the father is visited upon the son. It must be so. The order of nature is not suspended. It works inversely, because man will have it so, but it exists. He, therefore, who would know the extent of the wrong he does when he sins, should reflect, not only on its consequences to himself, but on the hereditary evil he transmits to his children. They are, it is true, not punished for it, but it gives them a proneness to actual evils for which they will be punished. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."—Ezek. xviii. 20. Divine mercy not only does not punish the children for the sins of their fathers, much less impute to them the sin of Adam, but He provides counteracting dispositions against the hereditary failings they have inseminated. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."—Rom. vi. 1. Unless the Lord had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah (Isa. i. 9). So far does He impart the beginning of an angelic nature to us, that He could say, in the days of His flesh, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xix. 14. The Lord has implanted in every soul the faculty of loving Him and loving His kingdom, His truth and His joy. And to them that love Him and keep His commandments He shews mercy, as He says, to the thousandth generation, that is, to all eternity. He blesses His obedient servant in all his relations of life. The first three commandments are the head and essence of the whole. They fill the rest with spiritual life. Without them the rest are dead and unavailing. The first three relate to spiritual life, the next five to the conduct of man in civil society, and the remaining two to his moral life and motives.

Here permit me to draw your attention to the interesting circumstances recorded in the Gospel, respecting the young man who came to enquire of the Lord what he must do to inherit eternal life. The Divine Saviour said, as He teaches ever, "If

thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments."—Matt. xix. 17. The young man came zealous to know, but not deeply reflecting. He said, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The Saviour, to excite him to think first, enquired, "Why callest thou me good?" adding, "There is none good but one, that is God." The Lord often asks questions: it is not for His own information, but for ours. He wished the young man to ask himself why he called Him good. He did not object to being called good, for He called Himself the good shepherd (John x. 11); also He said, "I am He that is holy, He that is true."—Rev. iii. 7. His question was like that directed to Adam, when the Lord said to him "Adam, where are thou?" not that omniscience needed to be told where Adam was, but that he dictated in the garden of Adam's soul the essential enquiry, "Adam, where art thou?" to lead him to know into what state he had sunk. So was it when the Lord questioned this young man. He first probed his conscience, and led him to inquire into the ground of his acknowledgment, and then gave him his instruction: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The young man answered, "Which?" And the Lord Jesus further replied, "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt honour thy father and mother." You will perceive that the Saviour only recited the civil and moral laws, having so far passed over the properly spiritual, or those relating to God. The young man answered: "All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" Now it was very true that the young man had kept these commandments, but by not having kept them from love to God and faith in Him, he had kept them only from self, and thus all his acts were tainted with evil, for self can masquerade in every dress. It can be pious, it can be moral, it can be talented, it can be patriotic, it can be learned, it can be outwardly humble, or, in other words, it can appear to be all these, and more; but if these appearances have self, and not God as their centre, they are all impure and corrupt, for without Him we can do nothing (John xv. 5), and before we can be united to the divine purity and joy the whole internal must be changed. Hence, the Lord Jesus said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." Thus the Lord taught him that he must part with what he before had, that is, his selfish desires, his self-derived intelligence, his selfish motives and possessions, and he would then have treasure

in heaven, and as the head and essence of that treasure would be the Lord Jesus Christ,—“Come and follow me,”—He was the God whom the young man had neglected. “Come and follow me.” The Saviour thus supplied what the young man was lacking—the essence of the first three commandments, which he had in reality not done.

Here, again, we see the blessedness of keeping the divine laws. The young man, though rich, and in many respects estimable; though in the sight of the world worthy of admiration, and to some an object of envy, was unhappy. He felt there was a void within, which no outward possessions, nor attention to outward law, or even the moral law alone, could fill. God must be enthroned there. He must be the tree of life in the centre of the garden, or there will be no paradise. His Holy Spirit can alone give the love, light, and joy, which can fill the atmosphere of the soul with golden light. He stands at the door and knocks; if any man will open the door he will come in and sup with Him, and man will taste his Maker's joy. No one can have that confidence, which is essential to happiness, who is not resting on the Rock of ages. No one has a right to have it. No one has a right to enjoy himself in the universe who does not render homage to its GREAT PROPRIETOR. But when a man devotes himself to the Lord, a peace inexpressible takes possession of his soul, a bright dawn, like that of a morning in spring, breaks in upon him, and all things laugh and sing. It is the kingdom of heaven come nigh unto him. It is heaven begun. Doubt and darkness have fled away; hope, peace, and joy, like a company of angels, have taken up their abode with Him. The Lord's service is perfect freedom. He hallows the Lord's name and all His divine qualities. He remembers the Sabbath-day in its literal and in its spiritual sense; He makes use of all the means of grace to fortify himself in his regeneration, ever having in view that peaceful state, that rest in God, which is the true sabbath of the soul.

We will now notice the commandments which relate to civil life, that is in the letter, for in the spiritual sense we must ever bear in mind they all relate to operations in the soul, and to our supreme obedience to the Lord, and the rejection of internal evils as sins against Him; in this sense, the commandments are exceedingly broad (Ps. cxix. 96). The time would fail to take each commandment, and shew how impossible it is for a heaven to be formed out of souls which would not keep it; and keep it not only in the act, but in the spirit and intention also. We need scarcely remark how miserable are the homes where the parents

are not respected. What insolences, what contempt, what slightings of parental counsel, what jealousies of the rest of the family, take away satisfaction from the children, and make a perpetual source of discomfort to the parents. The mourning hearts of father and mother are blighted, and where they fondly hoped for sympathy they meet with scorn and coldness. It is as though both sides were living under the perpetual droppings of gall which embittered every hour, and poisoned every enjoyment.

But, on the contrary, how blessed is the home where father and mother are honoured! Confidence in their loving hearts is felt. Mutual kindness weaves continually garlands of spiritual roses. The eye glows with affection, the mind is ready to counsel, and the hand to help at every opportunity; the life is a succession of kind offices. The home hearth is the sweet spot round which the affections ever play, and is to all the domestic heaven, the sweet centre of ten thousand joys and graces: "Blessed are they that keep the commandments." They learn from the happiness of loving their earthly father and mother, the supreme bliss of loving in the highest degree their Heavenly Father, and of receiving with devout respect the blessed influences of heaven and the church, which compose their spiritual mother, because they compose the honoured wife of the Lamb.

Let us take another commandment: "Thou shalt not commit murder." Who could possibly be happy while violating this? Even in the lighter form, in which the act is not committed, but as the Lord teaches in the Gospel, a person hates another, there is no possibility of happiness. Hate takes away peace from the heart where it dwells. It forms a brood of viperous tempers, which not only strive to injure the person hated, but also prey upon one another. The dark scowl of the hater betrays the dark malignity of the internal gloomy cavern in which his spirit dwells. A congregation of souls of this class, however forgiven without, could never be otherwise than a hell. Themselves are hell. Where'er they go, as Milton's Satan says, is hell, and there is no conceivable way of making this state a different one except by looking to the Lord, and beseeching Him to change this death into life, by imparting the power to subdue not only the effort to kill, but the thought, the wish to harm or injure any one, and as this desire is extinguished, the opposite desire will descend—the desire to aid, to bless. Then will the heart begin to know the holy luxury of doing good; the joy of being useful; the heaven of serving and advancing others. "Blessed are they that do His commandments."

The same result will follow the consideration of every other

commandment. No happiness can exist except in proportion as it is from the heart obeyed. No one could have a heaven where the inhabitants did not obey the commandment: "Thou shalt not steal." The disposition to take from others rather than to give to them, must create suspicion, violence, retaliation, revenge, and a whole host of miseries. The evil must create the hell. So with the polluted state which comes from the breach of the divine law: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The most fearful crimes are those which come from the awful sin of adultery. The hardening of the heart, the pollution of the mind, the degradation of soul and body which flow from adultery, are of the most fearful character. When this sin is committed, the very gates of the lowest hell are opened upon the soul. The lost spirits which defile one another, intensely despise and hate one another. Hence come so frequently misery and murder. While from the opposite virtues of chaste love and holy marriage, come elevation of mind, purity of heart, and advancement in all that is good. Marriage is the central pillar around which cluster the duties and charities of life, and innumerable benefits and blessings. The image of heaven, it is the circle of closest friendship, holiest union, and the intensest bliss. The future inhabitants of heaven issuing from this holy connection, its fireside felicities come the nearest to those blessed scenes which exist where prevails the marriage-supper of the Lamb. They who never sully themselves with a breach of this sacred law, know in the purities they enjoy, in the blessed interchange of thought and affection; in the delightful companionship and intercourse of tenderest cares and endearments; in the mutual self-sacrifice they delight to make, how blessed a thing it is to keep sacredly this commandment. Again and again we say, How could a heaven exist where these perfect laws exist, or how can a breach of them result in anything but sorrow? It is the same with bearing false witness against the neighbour. An atmosphere of lies must be fraught with curses. Even the last two commandments, though externally not appearing to relate to evils so formidable to society, in reality do so most completely. Where all are covetous must be misery indeed; to feel that you were surrounded by those who envied you every comfort, who greedily watched and waited for every opportunity to despoil you. The hell of the covetous must be a real chamber of horrors, overflowing with envy and gall. On the contrary, as this spirit is shunned or subdued, a delight in imparting takes its place, a rejoicing over another's joy. A cheerful generous outpouring of blessed influences, an intense satisfaction in the well-

being of others ; a watchfulness in seizing every opportunity to promote the general joy. These principles and states unlock the very portals of bliss, and give us the reason for the divine words: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isa. xlviii. 18.

And in view of these great truths, so clear of themselves, how strange it seems to hear religious teachers declaring that God did not give the commandments to be kept; they were given only that man might learn his inability to keep them, and trust not to obedience, but to imputation for pardon and for heaven. Why, however man were pardoned, if he entered heaven with a spirit that did not obey the commandments, it would be no heaven to him. The commandments not given to be obeyed ! why there is no happiness possible but in proportion to this obedience. How affectingly does the Lord place this often before us, even at the giving of the law: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever."—Deut. v. 29. "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us."—Deut. vi. 24, 25.

Let it not be said, that in the New Testament these divine laws are repealed, for the very reverse is the case. The Lord came to give us new power to keep these essential laws of our happiness. "Think not," said He, "that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 17, 19, 20.

How conclusive is this. At the moment when, according to some, the Lord had come to destroy the requirement that the law should be obeyed, He Himself assures us that the opposite is the fact, and He proceeds to say, that without righteousness, more than that outer righteousness which the Jewish priests had, in no case could a man enter into the kingdom of heaven. His entire teaching is in harmony with this: "Not every one

that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father who is in heaven."—Matt. vii. 21. Again, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."—John xiv. 15. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."—Ver. 21. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings."—Verses 23, 24.

Not only the Lord Jesus in the New Testament, but the apostles also taught the same doctrine, that salvation and happiness were alone to be secured by keeping the commandments. Hence the apostle Paul: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. xiii. 10. Again, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."—1 Cor. vii. 19. Once more: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."—Gal. v. 6. Surely here, neither in the master nor the servant, is there any setting aside of the commandments, and the substitution of a new rule; not that of actual righteousness done from love and faith, but that of the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus being accounted as ours. There is no warrant whatever in the Scriptures, or in reason for any righteousness being imputed to us, that has not first been imparted to us. The Lord is not a God who countenances any deceptions. He is a God of truth. But the doctrine of imputation, as commonly taught, is built upon two unfounded statements. First, it is said Adam's sin is imputed to us; and, secondly, the Lord's righteousness. But both these statements are unjustified by the Sacred Word.

Both these imputations are false. No one is punished because of Adam's sin; but every man is rewarded according as his work shall be. Jer. xvii. 10; Matt. xxv. 40, 45; Rom. ii. 6; Rev. xxii. 12. It is true that sin entered into the world by man's turning from God, called Adam's transgression, and that a tendency to evil is transmitted from parents to children, and so are tendencies to good, but none are punished or rewarded for tendencies, but for actual sins or actual virtues. The imputation to any one of what does not actually belong to him, is a false and spurious proceeding, which should never be attributed to the God of truth. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is His law. "He who turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, shall save his soul alive."—Ezek. xviii. 27. The imputation to man of the merit of the Lord's

righteousness, to be placed down to man's account as if he had done it, is also groundless and unjust. The Lord's righteousness is divine. Man ought no more to lay claim to that, or to expect that it will be attributed to him, than he ought to lay claim to the merit of creation, the merit of supporting the universe. In fact, no man goes to heaven by merit at all. He goes to heaven because he is prepared for heaven. He is prepared for heaven because he has the Lord's righteousness imparted to him, in the degree that he shuns evil and supplicates the Lord for power to be good, and to do good. Our righteousness is from the Lord, but is imputed to us only as we do it. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous."—1 John iii. 7.

But it is sometimes said, "We have no power to keep the commandments, and, therefore, unless we can get to heaven some other way, we shall not get to heaven at all." But this is calumny against the Creator. Bad enough would it be to say, He created people without mouths, and required them to eat; or without legs, and required them to walk; but infinitely worse is it to say, He gave them no power to obey, and punished them for ever for not obeying. This confirms the evil in sin, and betrays the weak to their ruin. It is totally unwarranted in the Scriptures, dishonouring to the Saviour, and absurd in itself. What, no power to keep the commandments! when the Lord came to give you power, and says He does give it (Luke x. 19), and charged you to be perfect, in imitation of Him (Matt. v. 48). What, talk of being saved, and yet not delivered from sin! Did the Lord's coming, death, glorification, and resurrection, give no power to follow Him in the regeneration, and to keep His commandments? Is keeping the commandments such a difficult thing that the Holy Spirit cannot enable us to do it? The apostle said, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthened me," and why cannot you? It is not the power you want, it is the will. Keeping the commandments does not make difficulties; it is NOT keeping them. Awake to righteousness, and sin not. Rouse yourself to the determination to vanquish evil, and with the Lord and His angels assisting you, the victory will be sure.

Oh, then, let us hasten to enter upon this blessed life. It will save us from a thousand, thousand ills, and introduce us to innumerable blessings. It will be a charm to change all the baser metals of our life into gold. It will exhaust the sources of sorrow, and aid in the great work of turning our desert into a garden of God. All our earthly ties will be sanctified by purer connecting links, and heaven will be to us unveiled.

SERMON XXXV.

J E S U S,

THE ROOT, THE OFFSPRING, AND THE STAR.

"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."—Rev. xxii. 16.

BECAUSE the divine principles which flow from the Lord can be separated in the human mind, and have been separated, their distinct character and influence are frequently treated of in the Word. This, to minds not deeply reflective, has seemed to sanction the idea of separate persons in the Godhead. When they read of the Divine Love as the Father, they have represented to themselves a distinct person under that name, and instead of learning the dealings of Divine Love with man, which the Scriptures intended to unfold in describing the operation of the Father, they have too often divided and distracted their conceptions of God. When they read of the manifestation of God, the Divine Wisdom, the Logos, the Divine Humanity, and its operation as the Mediator, they have thought of another divine person, and though they have read much of the Father being in the Son, they have nevertheless thought more of division, than they have of union in God. When they have read of the Holy Spirit being sent from God, they have so far been under the influence of the spirit of division, that they have not thought of the divine influence flowing from the one God, but rather of a finite form going about here and there where he was sent by the two other divine persons. Not only, however, is this unhappy divided idea the result of a mere surface consultation of the Holy Word, but it has been formed by the entire neglect of those numerous declarations of Scripture in which all the divine excellencies are grouped together, and declared to belong to one Divine Person. A passage of this kind we have now before us. The Lord Jesus declares, He is the Root, that is the Father;

He is the Offspring of David, that is the Son; and the bright and morning star, that is the Spirit of the Lord, shining in the soul. Who can contemplate this sublime declaration by Himself, and not perceive that the whole fulness of the Godhead is in Him? If He is the sender of angels; if He is the Root of all things; if He is also the Son born to be the Head of all things, that men might abide in Him and He in them; if He is the shining light that ushers in a new day to the soul; why then He is the all in all (Col. iii. 11).

We will endeavour to examine these appellations more fully, and we shall see how completely they direct our minds to the One Divine Saviour, the First and the Last.

The Lord says, I am the Root; and the root is obviously the source, the origin, from which all the rest of the tree proceeds. The root of David, of course, implies the origin whence David had his being, and that is equivalent to the Life, the origin of all things. There is mention of this Root in Isaiah twice. "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 Jehovah shall rest upon him."—Isa. xi. 1, 2. Again, "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."—Ver. 10. The Root is described in these passages as bringing forth a Branch, which is also recognized in the text before us as the Offspring. The Branch is generally admitted by Christians to mean the Lord Jesus, but they have not so generally admitted that He is also the Root. Yet nothing can be plainer than the Lord's statement, "I am the Root, and the Offspring of David." He is the Father and the Son; the Father in the Son. The Root is that portion of the tree which is underground, and therefore is invisible. It is also the source whence all the rest of the tree derives existence, its continued productive power and its life. Thus the Root corresponds to the Father, the Infinite Divine Love, who is life itself, the all-originating Divinity. This, like the Root, is invisible. No man hath heard the voice of the Father at any time, or seen His shape (John v. 37). Yet it is the fountain of all existence, the source of all divine operations. As it is in itself, it is infinitely above all human, all angelic thought. Yet it is the Root of all being. If we reflect for a moment, we shall find that three things are implied in every divine operation. These three are Love, Wisdom, and Power. Let us take, for instance, the created universe. It is self-evident that it would not have been created, and would not now exist, unless there had been power

to create it; and unless there was now power to continue creation, and sustain it. But power is an effect of intelligence. No person can do what he does not know how to do. And so much wisdom is displayed in the innumerable arrangements of the universe, that we may well take up the beautiful words, "in wisdom thou hast made them all." The highest intelligence of human beings consists of the best acquaintance they can form with the divine works. The accumulated wisdom of all ages has not enabled men to form even a blade of grass. How great, then, must the intelligence be, which originates all the laws of all the movements which the universe contains; from those which bring out the perfections of the tiniest moss, to those which form the grandeurs of the old world forests. How wondrous is the world of beauty disclosed in the flowers! The arrangements which elaborate from the inanimate soils and gases the glorious hues and gorgeous forms which grace the earth in field, in garden, and in wood; which in a setting of lovely green exhibits the gems of innumerable flowers, as stars of earth emulating with sweeter variety the splendour of their brethren of the sky, must surely command our admiration. But what are these to the laws which are disclosed in animal existence? How wondrously wise are the provisions for the existence and comfort of the smallest animalcule; and then, if from these we trace the increasing perfection of being through reptile, fish, insect, bird, beast, and, lastly, up to man, how can we mark the perfect adaption of life, nerves, blood, arteries, veins, bones, muscle, skin, and the entire organization of each form, and the provision of root, fruit, grain, or other food, without the confession of enlightened adoration, His understanding is infinite. We cannot stay to notice the universe in its grander features. Suffice it to glance at the order and perfect law which exist in those planetary arrangements which enable astronomers to predict for hundreds of years beforehand, the exact moment when an eclipse will happen, or where a planet will be, which bind world to world, sun to sun, system to system, starry group to starry group, through space too vast even for the imagination to grasp; where

" All thought is lost and reason drown'd
 In the immense survey;
 We cannot fathom the profound,
 Nor trace Jehovah's way."

Enough, we see wisdom and intelligence every where, and hence there is power and perfection of operation. But wisdom flows from love, intelligence from will, light from life. A person lives first, and thinks after. And even in the intelligence of the

Deity we can discern the same order. All is wisely arranged to effect a good end. The end is obviously intended by love, for its object is to bless others. Let us for simplicity's sake take the production of a fruit, and consider it for a moment. Before an apple could be formed, the sun with his perfections, the earth with its laws, and yearly and daily motions, must exist. There must be seed, soil, seasons, and growth. There must be atmosphere, rain, and variations of light, heat, and humidity, and time for operation. And of course this would all have been in vain had there not been beings to whom fruit is necessary and agreeable, thus with appetite and all the provision for digestion and assimilation. All these imply wondrous power and wondrous intelligence. But inasmuch as these all exist to give fruit to man, and give it him for nothing, they imply above all, and in all, the infinite and disinterested desire to bless. This desire, the very activity of Infinite Love, is the first impulse from the Root.

Infinite Love was also the Root of redemption. "In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."—Isa. lxiii. 9. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."—John iii. 16, 17. It is often supposed that the Root, the ground-work of redemption, was the primitive justice of God, sometimes called His vindictive justice. It is said, He laid down a law, simply because He would forbid man to eat of a certain tree, not that there was anything worse in that tree than in other trees, but just to test man's obedience. The penalty of disobedience was death, temporal and eternal, to the offender and his unborn posterity for ever. But what a dreadful misrepresentation of Divine Love is this! What a caricature of divine justice is such a representation! It rests only on ignorance of God, ignorance of the garden of Eden and its trees, ignorance of man, and ignorance of the death he is to shun. Who could know anything of the love of God, and think of His forbidding anything which is not essentially wrong? Who could know anything of divine justice, and conceive of it as punishing children unborn for sins they never knew? Why that would not be justice, it would be diabolical revenge. Justice only punishes wrong, and only punishes that for the sake of the criminal's reformation, and the universal good. Oh no! it is not justice which these views ascribe to God, it is REVENGE, and that does

not exist in Him. God is just, but His justice is the unswerving exercise of His love. God is just, but He is just to Himself; and however man changes and makes himself miserable, God changes not. He is a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside Him (Isa. xlv. 21). What is called His law in Eden, was no law at all, it was a loving caution, a merciful admonition. God had brought man into such a state that He was the centre of his bliss, the Tree of Lives in the midst of his garden. His wisdom, his love, and his joy, were from Him. So long as he continued thus he would be happy. His soul would be like a watered garden. But Divine Love cautioned him that when he turned from heavenly wisdom to his own knowledge, which was from appearances only, he would die. He would come into that carnal state of mind which is the only real death (Rom. viii. 6). Man did turn away from God, and he died in that very state, in that day when he ate of the tree of his own knowledge of good and evil. Man turned from God, and became dark, cold, and miserable, but God did not forsake him. God followed him in the cool of the day, and when man hid himself, the Lord still made His voice heard in the garden of soul, now the abode of remorse and misery, and said, Adam (man) where art thou? What hast thou lost? What is now thy condition? Thou wert happy, but now thine innocence is lost; where art thou? Infinite mercy followed him. And though he lost paradise, that mercy opened to him the means of regaining it. Infinite mercy taught him to fight against the serpent, and he would be saved. Infinite mercy taught him, too, that the time would come when the wondrous seed of the woman would be revealed, that would bruise the serpent's head. The more man fell, the more infinite mercy followed him. The more dead he was, the more life abounded to raise him again. The Lord followed him by angels, by prophets, by His Word, by every means divine wisdom directed, and at length He came Himself into the world, for his redemption. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. v. 19). "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." It was as if a loving parent had a garden filled with all trees beautiful and good, but one tree was of a poisonous character. He would guard his child from it with cautious and sedulous care. He would tell him of its nature, and its destructive effects. And if, unhappily, the child still broke through these safeguards, and brought mischief and misery upon himself, the same love which had sought to guard him would now seek to stop the mischief and to save his life. Such

would be unchanging human love, but how infinitely more than this is the Divine 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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."—Isa. xlix. 15, 16. In all things of redemption, then, Divine Love is the Root.

"This precious truth His Word reveals,
And all His mercies prove;
Creation and redemption join
To shew that God is love."

From love, then, He followed man into his nature on earth, and formed for Himself a Humanity, His only-begotten Son: from love He lived in this Humanity, sustained temptations in it, died in it, perfected it, glorified it, rose again in it, reigns in it, "God over all, blessed for ever." This Divine Love is the Root of redemption, as it was and is of creation.

It is also the Root of regeneration, and of all the Lord's dealings with us. It is well for us, my beloved bearers, to look back occasionally over our individual lives, and see how goodness and mercy have followed us. I was looking around me, the other day, in the beautiful cemetery at Highgate, and among a vast number of epitaphs, almost all appropriate, and indicative of great improvement in this department of human life, there was one I especially noticed. It struck me as singularly becoming in its simple beauty. It was just the verse, "Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." And who of us cannot say the same? How loving and careful was the provision for our birth! Our parents were filled with fond affection that led them to provide every necessary for our comfort. The tiny clothes were prepared, the little socks were knit with delighted care. Nothing was too good or too pretty to decorate the little immortal Divine Providence had placed in loving hands. So was it with our earliest food—sent at the right time, and in the right place, so that the baby's life is a continual feast. And need we trace it onwards: has not our education, our youthful discipline, the parental home and care, even the troubles that have taught us discrimination, judgment and caution; the books we have read, the friends we have formed, the scenes through which we have passed, our pains, privations and struggles even, have they not been for our good? Our sorrows have been blessings in disguise. If we have passed through much tribulation our robes have become brighter. Our tribulations have worked patience, hope, which maketh not

ashamed, and love which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us (Rom. v. 5). What is the whole world, and all the heavenly world (for He has given His angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways), but a universe of ministrations, by which Infinite Love pours around us its healings and its blessings?

" Either thy hand preserves from pain,
Or if we feel it, heals again ;
From Satan's malice shields our breast,
Or overrules it for the best."

Here again we see, as in creation and redemption, so in regeneration and in Providence, the Root of all Divine operations of Infinite Love. This love had not to be persuaded or prevailed upon by another person out of itself to save man. This Love is Jehovah, and Jehovah Himself became our Saviour. This Love is the Father, and the Father Himself took our nature in the Son, so that he who saw Him, saw the Father (John xiv. 8). He who saw Him, saw Him that sent Him (John xii. 45). Our Father saved us by the Son. Who else was so likely, who loved us so well?

How astonishing it is that, when this fact is stated so broadly and so often in the sacred page, it should so long have been overlooked. " Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting."—Isa. lxiii. 16. Jesus was no second person, He was the Father Himself ; clothed, it is true, in our wondrous nature, but yet " God manifest in the flesh."—1 Tim. iii. 16. This was prophesied : it was commanded to be proclaimed centuries before it happened. " It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us : this is the Lord (Jehovah) ; we have waited for Him ; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."—Isa. xxv. 9. " Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not : behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence ; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."—Isa. xxxv. 4—6. Here we have, in the plainest language, the time fixed when the fulfilment of this prophecy would take place. It would be when the eyes of the blind were opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame man walked, and the dumb sang. And when was this but once, in the life of the Lord Jesus. It was no doubt in reference to this prophecy, that when John sent

to the Lord to enquire if He were the Messiah who should come, or they must look for another, the Lord Jesus replied, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."—Matt. xi. 4—6. It is obvious the Gospel announces a fulfilment of the prophecy. But whom does the prophecy declare as He who should come? We can only answer, Your God, even God, He will come and save you. Again; let us take the words of the prophet, where John the Baptist is described. "The voice of one that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Jehovah), make straight in the desert a highway for our God."—Isa. xl. 3. In each of the four gospels John is declared to be the voice here spoken of, Matt. iii. 3. But whose way is he said to prepare? The only answer possible is, The way of Jehovah. Whose highway was he to make straight? The answer is, The highway of our God. In a succeeding portion of the same chapter we have the Saviour's coming predicted. "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. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."—Isa. xl. 9—11. Here, there can be no doubt, that the prophet alludes to the great Saviour as the Good Shepherd, and certainly he declares Him to be the Lord God. Your God. And constantly the theme is, that there is only one Being who can save man, and that is God Himself. Take, as a striking instance of this, the following declaration: "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord (Jehovah); and beside me there is no Saviour."—Isa. xliii. 11. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."—Ver. 25. Notice the expression, "for mine own sake." People very commonly pray to one divine person for the sake of another. But this practice has no countenance in Scripture. The Lord, Himself, blots out our transgressions, and does it for His own sake. He is the Saviour Himself, and there is none beside Him. Take another declaration in the succeeding chapter: "Thus saith the

Lord (Jehovah) the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord (Jehovah) of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."—Ver. 6. Again: "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."—Isa. xlv. 21, 22. Can anything be stronger than these declarations? Do they not, in the most absolute manner, declare that there is only one God, who is the only blotter out of sin, the only Saviour of the sinner, the first and the last, and who is no other than the Eternal Jehovah Himself, the very root and origin of all things? When, therefore, the Lord Jesus, at the closing of His word says, "I am the Root," what else can we understand from Him, but that He is that Eternal Jehovah of whom the prophets speak; that He is the Infinite Lord who has created, and will save, and regenerate all who come to Him. "I am the Root."

The Lord declares Himself to be the offspring of David, as well as the Root. And here, as everywhere in the Word, especially of the New Testament, we may see in Him the Divine Humanity as well as the Essential Divinity. For we have already seen that He proclaims Himself the Root of all things, which, of course, is the same as Jehovah, the Father. Now He proclaims Himself the offspring of David, which, undoubtedly, refers to the Son. We cannot doubt that the Lord assumed the Humanity in the race of David, and thus was called His Son. On that account Zacharias, when filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied and said, on the birth of John, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David."—Luke i. 68, 69. Externally the human nature was from the mother, and thus from David; but, internally, it was from the Father, and was thus the Son of God, David's Lord, even at His birth. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."—Ver. 35. To teach us that the Lord retained His Humanity, and the same Humanity, though now divested of all its materialty, and consisting only of that glorious substance which had been within the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5).

To be the offspring of David has also a still higher sense. As Abraham was a type of the Lord, whence heaven is called Abraham's bosom, so is David. He was the fighting and conquering king of Israel, and he was a type of the Divine Truth which fights, conquers, and reigns in the church. The Divine Humanity is the offspring of the Divine Truth, in Him the Word

was made flesh. Divine Truth was embodied. In this respect He proceeded from the Father, and in the glorified Humanity the embodied Divine Truth is the very form of the Divine Love. To teach us this, then, He said, "I am the offspring of David." He was still a man, but a Divine man. He had still a body, but a Divine body. He was more a man than any spirit. His Divine Spirit was clothed with a body like a man in the world is, but His body, like His soul, is Divine. Hence, with the Divine Son, the whole church can be united, and through Him with the Father. It should never be forgotten, we have no direct communion with the Father. "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son." We come to the Son, and the Son reveals the Father to us. The Lord said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."—John xiv. 6. We cannot too much ponder over this wonderful provision by which God has brought Himself nigh to us, and adoringly embrace this God with us, this Branch from the great Tree of Life, Isa. xi. 1; Zech. vi. 12. The Father out of the Son is beyond human grasp or approach. In the glorified Son the Godhead shines with a soft and human radiance, divinely human. This is the great doctrine of the New Testament. How much it is to be regretted that it has so long been overlooked, and yet it is so simple. We are to abide in the Lord, and the Father is in Him. That is the true order, set forth again and again. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."—John xvii. 21. "Without me ye can do nothing."—Chap. xv. 5. "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love."—Ver. 10. He is in the Father's love, we are in His love. The doctrine of the glorified Humanity united to the Father, and becoming the medium by which we and the Infinite could be conjoined with each other, marks every portion of the Saviour's teaching. The soul requires such a medium, and God came to give it. We want a living Head, a living Saviour, a divine Saviour, and yet not a new or rival Deity. We want the Father brought to view, the invisible manifested, the incomprehensible accommodated to the mind, so that we can embrace Him. And all this is done in the glorified Humanity. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and He is the head of all things, and by Him all things consist, Col. ii. 10, 11. The Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified, but so far as He was glorified, He said, "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."—John xvi. 15. "All power is given unto me in heaven and on

earth."—Matt. xxviii. 18. "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age."—Ver. 20. This conjunction with the Son as a living Divine Saviour, is the grand requisite for all spiritual life. "I am come," He said, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—John x. 10. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."—John v. 40. The earnest soul asks for life, for light, for peace within, and these can only be obtained from the blessed Lord our Saviour. "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me."—John vi. 57. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."—John vi. 53. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."—John x. 9. "I am the light of the world."—John viii. 12. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."—John xvi. 33. How can we fail to see and embrace this gracious doctrine of the Father in the Son? It is so plain, so delightful, and so fully meets the spirit's wants. We need to hold communion with God; we need that God should be before us, so that we can comprehend and love Him. In Jesus this is fully given. He is the way, the truth, and the life, John xiv. 6.

Many excellent persons have ceased to look confidently at the Deity, if not to adore Him, because they have wearied themselves with trying to comprehend three separate divinities without bodies, but yet persons, and somehow side by side, and nevertheless one. O that they would now hear the Saviour, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He is not a rival to the Father, He is the Father Himself in a Divine Humanity. "I and my Father are one."—John x. 30. Cease to gaze at formless space: look at the Divine Man. His arms are outstretched to receive you. "Whosoever will come unto me, I will in nowise cast him out." Fix your faith and love upon Him, your Master and Lord, and your perplexities will all cease.

Many other excellent persons have been led to renounce the Divine Trinity, because it seemed inconsistent with the unity of God. But a Trinity in Jesus is most perfectly consistent with the truest unity. These have been led, by the same perplexities, to deny the divinity of the Saviour, because He was placed before them as a second God. But all the difficulty vanishes when we regard Him as the God of heaven in His Divine Humanity, assumed and sanctified, that He might conjoin Himself to His people, and by that means save them. Thus, the whole Scripture is harmonized, and reason, too, rejoices. Reason asks for

an intermediate between itself and the infinite unknown. **And** what can be such a medium but the Divine Humanity? We want no mere human saviour, we want a Divine Saviour. Our Father, Himself, brought to view. How could all souls abide in the Saviour, unless He was Divine? How could He be with us alway, unless He were omnipresent? How could He have power over all flesh, over all in heaven and on earth, unless the Father were in Him as His soul? How could His name be above every name, so "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," Phil. ii. 10, unless He had been the very Humanity of God the Father. To have placed a mere creature, a man, or angel, in this position, would have been to organize idolatry, to draw the whole intellectual and moral universe round a creature. But, no; it cannot be. He is the First and the Last; the King of kings and the Lord of lords, because He is the Almighty, Rev. i. 8. He is "the Root and the Offspring of David."

The Divine Speaker goes on to say, He is "the bright and the morning star." The star, we have shewn on several occasions, is representative of the light of knowledge. The light of the sun represents the light of wisdom, which flows direct from love; the light of the moon represents the light of faith, which illuminates the soul when it is in trial; the light of the stars represent the rays of knowledge which come from each individual statement of Holy Writ, when opened and seen by the mind. All light, in reality, comes from the Lord, though He gives it by various mediums. When the soul, first arrested by eternal things, ponders over the Word, and in deep humiliation sees its sinfulness and nothingness; when it has been abased in dust and ashes, and all has seemed darkness, anguish, and loneliness; where the heart has felt its own bitterness, and feels condemned in the sight of God, then is the spirit's night. But if the condemned one look up to the Saviour, a gleam of holy light comes in to cheer and comfort. "Weeping endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning." The first joyful radiance which will come in the application of some divine promise from the Saviour, is "the bright and the morning star." It is the Holy Spirit from Him, imparting hope and deliverance. It speaks of a better dawn, a blessed morning. It is bright with the promise of a glorious day. It ushers in a new state, in which evil will be conquered, fallacy and folly dispersed, and peace possessed. It is the realization of the divine words, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." It is the ushering in of

true freedom, the liberty of the children of light. "Where the spirit of the Lord is," says the apostle, "there is liberty, the LORD IS THAT SPIRIT."—2 Cor. iii. 17. "I am the bright and the morning star," then, means that the first gleaming of the spirit of truth and holiness in the soul, is the spirit of the Lord Jesus shining there; and we need not add, all the increasing light which beams within, until the Sun of righteousness has fully risen upon the soul, is also from Him.

"In darkest shades, if Thou appear,
My dawning is begun;
Thou art my soul's bright morning star,
And Thou my rising sun."

How complete, then, is this assurance from the Saviour Himself, that the whole Divine Trinity is in Him. He is "the Root, the Offspring, and the Star." He is the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Well, then, may we acknowledge in Him the sender of angels. "I, Jesus, will send mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." He is the God of angels, even as to His Humanity. When He bringeth the first-begotten into the world, He saith, "Let all the angels of God worship Him."—Heb. i. 6. But unto the Son He saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."—Ver. 8.

Let us, then, adore the Son. Let us kiss the Son, lest we perish by the way, Ps. ii. 12. In Him, by Him, and through Him, we shall be receptive of every blessing. He is the Root of all good and of all being—the Divine Love—the Father. And, that He might not for ever be the unknowable, but that we might obtain conjunction with Him, He has put forth the Offspring, the Son, the embodied Divine Wisdom, the Son of His love, and if we approach Him in thought and heart we shall find His sacred light opening within us, and affording joy and peace.

The New Church has this glorious Being for her centre, her light, and Her glory; the New Age demands this. Too long have men worshipped an unknown God, and attributed to Him their own states and dispositions. The time has come in which it must, without obscurity or reservation, be confessed that Jesus is indeed Lord of all, Acts x. 36. We must learn, from listening to and following the Saviour, what our heavenly Father is. We shall then find that round the Divine Man all orders of being take their place; all the heavens derive their excellencies and their joys from Him. Heaven and the church are His body, and He their divine soul, their root, the origin of all the bless-

ings they have. He will become, also, a root to the earth; morality, reason, literature, politics, and science, have each their allotted place in the government of this Divine Man, and when rooted in Him will each perform their allotted use. "The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and HE shall reign for ever and ever."

The term "morning star," in our text, suggests the idea that a true knowledge of the Lord would open a new day for mankind. The Old Dispensation settled in night. It was a day vigorous and bright at first, but which soon saw its fullest and best state, and then waned. Soon the spread of Christian knowledge gave way to the dogmatism of dictatorial, half-heathen spirits, who spent their time in making hair-splitting creeds, and persecuting those who did not adopt them. "The love of many waxed cold," as the Lord predicted; iniquity abounded, and faith in truth and goodness gave way to unbelief. The morning and noon passed away, and evening and night came on. A dark and a cold night it was. But, blessed be the Divine Goodness, a bright morning star would shine again. The true knowledge of the Lord Jesus would be such a star, and a new day would begin,—the day of the New Jerusalem. The knowledge of Him as the root and the offspring, as the Father and the Son, as Divine and Human, would introduce a new dispensation of love and wisdom to mankind. From this all things would become new. "The time cometh," the Lord said, "when I will shew you plainly of the Father," and that time has come. The Lord shines even now upon the soul as the bright and morning star. He will shine as the moon, and at last as the sun shining in his strength. To the New Church, in this last dispensation of God to men, the prophet's words are truly applicable. "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."—Isa. lx. 20.

All other ideas group round our conceptions of God. These are our inmost principles, the deepest, the most powerful, and the most influential of our nature. All people will walk in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord (Jehovah) our God, for ever and ever. When men deified their own selfishness, and worshipped it as God, and surrounded it with mystery, as a thing too sacred to be examined, everything else became selfish and mysterious. Not only the doctrines, but the very services of religion, were shrouded in mystery, and that which would have been common-place in good English, was something awfully holy in bad Latin. Monarchs were supposed

to have a mysterious right divine, and their claims were too sacred to be examined; this was selfishness and mystery in government. The laws gave oppressive privileges to its makers, and were enveloped in language unintelligible to the people. It was the same with philosophy, with medicine, with science, with ordinary handicrafts even, all were kept as mysterious as possible, as completely for the selfish advantage of individuals as possible. It was selfishness and mystery, in circle after circle, to the very extremes of society. But as the Lord at His first advent introduced a new day to mankind, by bringing life and immortality to light, and as the prophet foresaw, a star arose out of Jacob, and a sceptre out of Israel (Numb. xxiv. 17), so would it be in the second advent. To know the Lord as a Divine Man, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9), is to see a star of unutterable beauty. It is to see the Divine Love and Wisdom embodied. It is to worship Him who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty; so infinitely loving that He has never forsaken His creatures, and never will; so wise that He has provided means for our restoration from the lowest depths of misery, folly, and crime, yet without destroying our freedom, and so powerful that salvation is secure for all who come unto Him. O may these glorious principles, infinite in Him, speedily repeat themselves in legislation, in literature, in philosophy, in science, in business, and in all the phases of social life. More love and more light; this should be our aim, our prayer, our cry. Rise, bright morning star, upon our souls. Enter upon thy glorious government. Send us, Prince of Peace, thy light and love to do thy will on earth as it is done in heaven. Hasten the blessed period when Thou, Jehovah, shalt be King over all the earth; when Thou shalt be adored in all the nations of the earth as the one Lord, and thy name ONE (Zech. xiv. 9).

“ To Jesus be praise without end,
 For glories reveal'd in His Word!
 We see the new city descend,
 Adorn'd as a bride for her Lord.
 Here nothing can enter unclean:
 No evil can breathe in the air:
 No gloom of affliction is seen;
 No shadow of darkness is there.

“ With wonder and joy we behold
 The holy Jerusalem here;
 Whose buildings and streets are of gold;
 Whose walls are of jasper most clear.

THE DIVINE WORD OPENED.

With stones her foundations are set,
That glow with a lustric serene :
Her gates, all of pearl, never shut ;
And nations and kings shall come in.

“ No need of the sun or the moon
To shine on this happy abode ;
Her light, more resplendent than noon,
Beams forth from the glory of God.
The Lamb is her light, and her sun,
Of life and salvation the spring :
Jehovah and Jesus are one,
Her Saviour, her God, and her King.”

SERMON XXXVI.

AN INVITATION TO THE WATERS.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."—Rev. xxii. 17.

DIVINE truth is a sacred stream from heaven. It flows from the Lord as a fountain. It is a river of life to the angels. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High."—Ps. xlv. 4. When represented to the view of the heavenly inhabitants, it appears as a grand flowing stream. "I saw," the apostle John says, "a river of the water of life, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb."—Rev. xxii. 1. And, truly, such a stream it is. The soul has spiritual appetites corresponding to those of the body. It thirsts after truth as the water of life. The divine mercy has provided, in the Word, for this thirst to be supplied. "As the hart thirsteth for the water-brooks, so thirsteth my soul after thee, O my God."

It is interesting to notice, that in Eden, the paradise of old, divine truth is represented as a fountain, having four streams. Its water, though rising from one source, the wisdom of God, is received by man in four ways; by wisdom, by intelligence, by reason, and by science: these are the four streams from Paradise. So, in the New Jerusalem, the paradise regained, there is the river of the water of life, and the tree of life, in the midst of the street of the city, and on both sides of the river (Rev. xxii. 2). In the golden age men delighted to receive divine wisdom from heaven. That wisdom, which became the spirit of the Holy Word, was to them a river of refreshing, sparkling, purifying, and delightful truth. To the New Church the spirit of the Word would be exhibited through the knowledge of correspondences revived, and, as the prophet said, "With joy they would draw water from the wells of salvation."—Isa. xii. 3. This wisdom is seen to underlie the whole Word, from the allegorical narratives in Genesis, through the Israelitish history, in which the spiritual

sense exists, though the record is naturally true, and onward, through the prophets, the Gospels, and the Revelation; under the letter are the divine thoughts, which are as much higher than human thoughts as heaven is higher than the earth. Like the Psalmist, each Christian may say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters."

It is to the blessed waters of Divine Truth we are continually invited, in the Word itself. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."—Isa. lv. 1. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—John iv. 14. Water corresponds to truth in every respect. Water is delightful to the eye. It is like liquid silver. When thrown up into the sunbeams by a fountain, it sparkles like diamonds. And what is more delightful to the mental eye than truth? When the inner meaning of any proposition, or passage from the Divine Word is seen, it is beautiful, like silver to the eye; and when its relation to the Lord is also seen, it sparkles like richest gems. Without water there is no growth in vegetation; without truth there is no growth in ideas; the mind is a barren waste. Without water the functions of the body would not proceed. There would be no digestion, no assimilation, no secretion. Nay, the body itself is composed three-fourths of water. So is it with the operations of the soul. Without truth there is no digestion of the mental food which is presented to us daily in every way. What is passing before our eyes gives no true information and support to the mind, we cannot digest it, and its real import and meaning are unperceived. So, also, every good which we receive, unless it be accompanied with truth, is either turned to its opposite, or accepted very weakly, and soon lost again. The mind itself, is only healthy, only strong, as it is built up of truths. When the soul is without truths it is feeble, not firm; it is weak, not strong. The wicked easily hoodwink and lead astray those who are ill-informed and unreflecting. The blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch. How manifest it is, both from the urgent exhortations of the Word, to come to the light, to search the Scriptures, to reason with God, to understand the Word; and also from the noble faculties with which the Creator has endowed man, that it is most important for him to be well-instructed in the truth. Without the truth, he is imposed upon by the design-

ing of every shade; without the truth, he is the victim of superstition and error; he fears where he ought to trust and love; without the truth, he cannot enjoy the glorious world he inhabits; without the truth, the glorious things of the future world are hidden from his hopes and his faith. Without the truth, the work of regeneration can proceed but feebly; he knows but little of the purities to obtain which he should aim: but little of the means of defence against subtle evils, and Divine Providence will not permit him to be tried by dangers under which he would sink. Without the truth, the Word is in a great part a sealed book; a feast of fat things, a river of delights, but of which the soul is unable to partake: without the truth the Lord, our best friend, is looked upon with tremulous fear, with dark and boding awe, not as He really is, our Father, our ever-present Helper, our ever faithful Friend and Saviour. In fact, truth is the soul's daily food; "Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God." To debar the soul from learning and understanding the truth, is to debar it from becoming a man; it is to keep it, at best, in weak and sickly childhood, and often in states but little above the beasts which perish. Being in the LOVE OF TRUTH is to be in the way of all progress, not being in the LOVE OF TRUTH is to be in the way of those that perish.

The apostle speaks of those who are carried away with a strong delusion: "With all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."—2 Thess. ii. 10. He who is in the love of the truth will be ever progressive, ever enjoying, ever delighting in the Word, the world which now is, and looking forward in trustful love to that which is to come. To him nature will unlock her stores; science will be a never-ending source of improvement and pleasure; literature will reveal her charms; the arts will disclose their beauties; and spiritual wisdom will enable him to say, My Father made them all.

On this account, therefore, Heaven and the Church, the Spirit and the Bride, are represented as saying, Come; that is to say, Come and drink of the water of life freely. Truth is not only regarded as the water, but the water of life. Waters of life are truths of love, or in other words, truths flowing from and dictated by a spirit of love. All truths which flow from the Lord, and from angels, are truths of love. From love they come, and by love they can be appreciated. All the great truths revealed to the New Jerusalem are truths of love, and to these men are invited by the Spirit and the Bride.

The Bride is the church on earth, the Spirit the church in heaven. Both of these say, Come. The earnest desire of both is a yearning that men should receive the truths, now fully revealed in the New Jerusalem, and be saved and happy.

There is in the Word a tendency to group masses under single forms. No doubt this arises from a principle which prevails throughout the universe, namely, that each thing, however small, tends to repeat itself on a larger scale. An individual has everything in him which exists in society; he is, therefore, a society on a small scale: a society is a man on a large scale. Israel, though consisting of millions of persons, is yet very often addressed as an individual. So the prostituted church, though consisting of vast numbers, and enduring for ages, is represented by the woman seated upon many waters. And, though the infernals are many, Mark v. 9, yet they are represented as the Devil and Satan. The church, though consisting of all the good and the true, who accept the great principles of the New Jerusalem, yet are all regarded together as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. They are so considered, especially from the love they bear to the Lord Jesus Christ. The church is regarded as a female, because love is the chief feature in the female character, and love is the chief feature in the church. When the church is chiefly in the love of knowing and understanding the truth, then the church is a virgin; when she loves to practise the truth, she is a bride and wife. In the sight of the Lord she is as one beautiful and devoted woman. The apostle said, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."—2 Cor. ii. 2. When the church has entered into heartfelt communion with the Lord, and loves His truths and His commandments, then is she the spouse of the Lord. And, as His bride, she is represented as saying, "Come." Every member of the true church desires to see all men instructed, all initiated into the truth. They point to the waters, and say, "Come." Only the friends of error discountenance enquiry. They who have evil ends or false systems, which will not bear investigation, urge contentedness with ignorance, and are averse to active research. But they who have and do the truth, come to the light, and call upon others to come. They know its blessings, and desire others to know them. Come, they say, come, and "take of the water of life freely."

As the Bride is the Lord's church on earth, represented as one, although consisting of many individuals, because all are actuated by one feeling, so the Spirit describes the church in heaven, here, and elsewhere, signified by one angel, although

consisting of innumerable individuals, because all the blessed ones in heaven are in the Lord's sight as one. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."—Ps. xxxiv. 7. This is written in the singular number, doubtless, because all in heaven are actuated by one hallowed love for goodness, and for its Divine Source.

Each has his especial excellence, his especial talent and use. Each is an atom in the Grand Man, each society is an organ, but all together make one grand spirit or angel, and this Spirit says, "Come." Come to the light, come to the river of waters, come to the holy wisdom, which will delight, refresh, and purify your souls. The angelic world co-operates with the church upon earth, at all times, in the advancement of goodness and truth. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?"—Heb. i. 14. They commence their ministrations in our earliest days. Our Lord said of the little ones, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xviii. 10. They continue their blessed ministrations through life. "He hath given His angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways."—Ps. xci. 10. Their grand aim is to bring us to the truth. They suggest heavenly thoughts, they cheer us, they encourage us in our heavenward struggle. They drop a balm into our cup when it is bitter; if our souls are imprisoned they become its companions in the bonds, and when we have escaped they rejoice over us. If we decline they mourn, and when we turn again to our Heavenly Father they are delighted. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."—Luke xv. 10. They, therefore, intensely desire that men should receive the new outpouring of divine truth, which constitutes the Lord's Second Advent. When the Lord descended, at His First Advent, the multitude of the heavenly host sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth good-will towards men;" and now, a second time, the Lord proclaims still higher truth; again the angels say, "Come, take of the water of life freely."

And, here, let us for a moment ponder upon the beautiful and encouraging idea that is presented by the assurance, that the whole heavenly world, as one angel, says "Come." They know well the importance of the disclosures made to the New Jerusalem. They know them to be waters of life. The truths which shew us the Lord as really a God of Love; that bring before us His Divine Love and Wisdom as forming the spheres of heaven and its blessed societies; that disclose to us the inward spirit of His Word, everywhere like a spiritual stream, affording

us the living water which satisfies our inner thirst; the truths which give us the knowledge of ourselves, and of all our changes in the regenerate life; the truths which shew us the sure results of all good principles, which will build us up into angelic forms of celestial and spiritual beauty, these are the waters of life. These are the principles upon which heaven and earth are ruled, and all life flows into the universe. The angels know it, and they say, Come. Come and partake of what affords us so much delight. Come and learn how we are led by the Lamb to the fountains of living waters. Come and see how you are conducted along the paths of life, until you enter into His presence, "where is fulness of joy, even life for evermore."

The text next says, "let him that heareth say, Come. And something similar to this is often said in the Gospel, and in other parts of this book. The Lord frequently added to His parables, "He that hath an ear, let him hear;" and at the end of each epistle to the seven churches it is written, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It has been well remarked, that the ear is the way to the heart, the eye to the intellect. Of course, all the senses have to do with the whole man, indirectly, but each has an especial office, besides its indirect one. Hearing and tasting have directly to do service to the will; sight and smell to the understanding; and touch is the universal sense, which, like the ruling love, is present in them all, and in the whole body. Hearing spiritually, is giving heed that we may obey. He who from affection hearkens, is disposed to do. And thus he is in the condition of those of whom the Lord speaks, when He says, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then would thy peace have been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—Isa. xlvi. 18. When we have hearkened to and done the truths we have already learned, we are disposed to come for more. And, indeed, without this working into our lives, as far as we have had opportunity, what we already have received, it is not good for us to have more. To keep truth without doing it, is to be like those Israelites who kept manna without eating it, they found it produced worms and noxiousness. "If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them." "Let him that heareth say, Come." They who obey the truth will find the blessing of obedience, the order, the satisfaction, the peace which it brings. He who has obtained from the Lord the power, and enjoyed the blessedness of keeping the Lord's commandments, will have experienced that freedom from spiritual bondage, from anxiety, and from the dread of death, that he will, in effect, say with the

Psalmist, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul."—Ps. lxxvi. 16. His cup will run over. He who heareth will say, and he is exhorted to say, "Come." Such is the effect of all genuine heartfelt reception of the truth. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." The happiness of being the friends of the Most High, who said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you: the happiness of feeling ourselves conquerors of those evils which once so easily beset us; the happiness of entering more fully into the truths which before we only externally understood, for they who keep the commandments enter in through the gates into the city, all this makes him who hears, join his voice to those of the Spirit and the bride, and gladly say to all the world, "Come." Come and receive the freedom which I enjoy; come and live in the atmosphere which is so delightful to me; come and enjoy the sacred things of heaven here on earth, and thus prepare to enjoy them hereafter. Come and accept the bounty so fully and freely offered by Infinite Mercy. "Come. And let him that is athirst come."

The Lord has created man without the possession of any truth, but with the capability of advancing in truth for ever. The brute has naturally all the instinctive knowledge that it needs, and in this seems more perfect at birth than man. But man, though possessing no knowledge, has an affection for truth, which continually prompts him to its acquisition. This constitutes the first great distinction between him and the brute. He desires to know. When, in his early days, he scrutinizes everything, seeks for information daily, enquires from father and from mother respecting all he sees, this is a thirst which springs from his inner nature, and is an intimation of the upward tendency of his soul. And, so too when he becomes a man, and has accumulated vast stores of information, there is a constant desire to search deeper, to see more into the heart and hidden meaning and law of things, and this comes from the same interior thirst. All improvement is connected with this. A man who smothers this holy impulse, either from inordinate desire for material wealth, or from having his mind arrested by the assertion that the universe is all a mystery; that religion is especially a mass of mysteries not to be enquired into, suffers a fearful wrong. Such a mind becomes dull, stolid, stupid, more beast-like than man-like. False religions have much to answer for in this respect. They will not bear examination, and therefore forbid enquiry. If this only prevented the soul from immersing itself into numerous fallacies, no great harm would be

done; but, alas! it often arrests progress altogether, and degrades the rising man into the semblance of the dull ox. It deters and deadens progress, and leaves the mind inert, unless when startled by superstition. Stagnant water becomes heavy and impure; only the living moving stream preserves purity, and maintains health. How different are the invitations of the Word, from the warning and threats of a blind theology! "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."—Isa. i. 18.

The Lord desires us to reason with Him. He gave us this godlike faculty that we might use it, and by using it become continually more like Himself. It is the man who does not reason who remains attached to his prejudices and false persuasions; the man who reasons from the love of truth is a man of progress, who goes on a career of ever-increasing brightness unto the perfect day. Truths not understood are no defence and no blessing. Those who do not understand and do not thirst to understand, are they who are described by the Lord as receiving the seed by the wayside. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart."—Matt. xiii. 19. Only that which is understood and loved remains. We may see this even in the lessons of a child. What is learnt but not understood is soon forgotten; but what is so opened that the mind clearly understands it, is fixed for ever. To deaden the enquiring spirit is to darken the soul, and rob it of its highest enjoyment; on the other hand, to stimulate the thirsting for intelligence, this affection for the truth, is to rouse man's noblest aspirations. He only is a man who seeketh the truth, and exercises judgment (Jer. v. 1). The mind, which is content with the dogma of another, with the dictate of a person, a creed, or a book which he cannot understand, is far from the glorious standard of a man. His immortal thirst never can be satisfied. God has infinite blessings in store for him, but he never asks for them. He stumbles on in darkness when he might enjoy the light. He is not a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, and so he never finds them. How beautiful are the invitations of the Lord to draw us to the light and the love of true religion. "O taste, and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him."—Ps. xxxiv. 8. "He satisfieth the thirsty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."—Ps. cvii. 9. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."—Matt. v. 6. Nothing else can fill the soul but truth and good-

ness. Earthly wealth yields but a short satisfaction, earthly applause a still shorter one. Earthly power and dignity entail more trouble than pleasure; but the blessings of love and wisdom endure for ever, and for ever go on with increasing delight. So let every man be athirst for divine instruction; and let him that is athirst come to the river of the water of life, 'revealed in the New Jerusalem. The Word, in its spiritual sense, is of unbounded extent. The knowledge of the eternal world supplies immense instruction, each doctrine to the enquiring mind opens out into an infinity of applications. The doctrine of the Lord especially is a fountain of living waters. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."—John vii. 37. Enquiry then from a mind ardent for the love of truth, may here find unbounded exercise and unbounded satisfaction. There are no contradictions to deter, no alarming discrepancies, nor disagreements with other truths, rational or scientific, nothing out of harmony with the laws of mind, or with historical research. All her doctrines will be found to be in harmony with all other truths, and with themselves. Let him that is athirst then come, and he will find a never ending enjoyment.

We would here remark, that the invitation is first given to him that heareth, to say "Come;" and afterwards it is said, "Let him that is athirst come." And even this order is not without its significance. The grand pre-requisite for a healthy thirst after truth, is an obedience to that which we already know. He, however, who obeys, will assuredly thirst for more heavenly instruction, and then he may safely indulge it. The Word gives no encouragement to the search for truth, merely to gratify curiosity, or merely for the purpose of dispute or display, but for use. But when use is the object, when we desire to teach ourselves that we may benefit others, when we delight to know and understand more, that we may more deeply adore, more profoundly love, and more diligently serve the Lord, then may we indulge the sacred thirst for heavenly information. This is the reason why it is first said, "Let him that heareth say, Come;" and then follows, "Let him that is athirst come." And, lastly, we read, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely."

This recognition of the will, as the essential requisite for coming to receive heavenly gifts must not be overlooked. The Lord compels none to come; with Him it is always, whosoever will. The will is the man himself, all other faculties are accessories. If the will is not free, the man is a slave, however the

fetters may be of gold. To give the will free play, to form the rest of the mind after the fashion it desires, man has been created in a world of coverings. All things are covered to him, and he is covered. He need not disclose himself to others unless by choice. The Lord will not force his freedom, and other powers cannot. They may arrest His action, but not His will. The more He is prevented from carrying out a course He loves, the more He wills it. Freewill, which is the essential of all manhood and all goodness, is secured by infinite power, and preserved by infinite love. For its preservation evil is permitted, unless man had the power to realize evil when he wills it, he could never know its awful and abominable character, and freely be led to shun it. It has been thought by some that freewill was lost in Paradise when man fell. They admit he exercised it in the choice he made of the wrong course then, but suppose it was lost for ever. Yet, who does not feel that he has it yet. The same mercy which gave it at first, continued it in spite of sin. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Death came from self, but life came from the Lord, and man was conscious of both, and could choose either. Cain evidently had it when the Lord said to him: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door."—Gen. iv. 7.

The Israelites had it undoubtedly when the Lord said: "See I have set before thee this day, life and good, and death and evil."—Deut. xxx. 15. And again: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."—Ver. 19. The Saviour testifies that it was a perverse use of the will which had defeated his desire to prepare the disobedient for heaven. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not."—Luke xiii. 34. Indeed, without freewill, there would be no virtue, and could be no delight. Whatever good act a person may do, if he do it from compulsion, it is not good to him. Heaven itself would not be delightful to one who was forced into it. And sin would be no sin if man did it only because he could not help it. It is freedom that makes goodness belong to the man who loves and does it, and to whom therefore it can be imputed, and the evil done in freedom is also that which alone can be imputed to the wicked. Or in Scriptural language: "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon

him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."—Eze. xviii. 20. Recognizing this great principle the Lord will not, earth cannot, and hell must not impede or destroy this most essential of all faculties, the freedom of the will. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." There must be no compulsion in relation to this holy water of divine truth, there must be no persecution in the era of the New Dispensation. Whosoever will may come, but whosoever does not will must be suffered to remain in ignorance, or opposition. All descriptions of men however are invited to come. "Whosoever will, let him come."

The clergyman is invited to come, and learn those truths which will make his sacred office a delight, so that he can lead his lambs and his sheep to pure streams and fat pastures. The difficulties which to him have been painful mysteries, are here all solved, so that he may teach with delight, opening the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and finding them full of wisdom. The Lord Jesus, the one divine Shepherd, will instruct the under-shepherds, and they will lead their flock along ways which are ways of pleasantness, and paths which are paths of peace. The Word which he loves will be opened to him with new beauty, force, and light. The shades which have dimmed its sacred lustre will be removed, and he will indeed see that it is perfect, converting the soul.

The philosopher is invited to come. To him it is a painful thing to find that the truths taught him by nature, that grand book of divine wisdom displayed before the senses, is ever contradicted by a theology which professes to have come direct from the Almighty. But let him come to the living truths of the New Jerusalem. Let him behold the Divine Man, the embodiment of infinite love and wisdom, the centre, and originator, and supporter of all law, and he will then learn how it is that the universe at large, and in every part corresponds to a man. Man is its type, because God is a Divine Man, and man below is God's most perfect image. He will find that the Scripture did not harmonize with true philosophy, only, when the letter that killeth was followed, instead of the spirit that giveth life. He will discover with grateful delight that he need not deny, either the revelation from the Most High which brings a celestial philosophy to view, founded upon God is one and God is love, nor that philosophy which discerns harmony, order, and law, everywhere in nature; and makes of earth, except where perverted by evil, a grand symbol of heaven.

The merchant is invited. Religion is no longer the monopoly

of a few ; it is the delightful and consolatory companion of every man, and every act is to become an act of religion. To work from true principles is to worship. Not piety alone, but piety with practice makes true religion. The love of use is the grand characteristic of heaven itself, and the love of use will fill the merchant's occupation with the spirit of heaven. The merchant has for his grand use to knit mankind together by mutual benefits ; to form ties which link nations and peoples in amity and goodwill ; to stimulate improvement, to advance civilization ; instead of mutual plunder to substitute mutual gain ; to shew to distant nations how good the universal Father is to all His people in affording them plenty and to spare ; to spread a knowledge of the arts, the literature, and the Bible of enlightened men, and thus through the arteries of commerce to pour the rich blood of brotherly love, laden with ten thousand blessings. " Let him come to the river of life, and take of its water freely."

The manufacturer is invited. His great operations are great blessings, when he remembers that the work-people around him are children of the same heavenly Father with himself, and now living a life which will terminate in heaven or hell. To lead them in justice and enlightenment is then a great work. To be an example to them of right, of patience, and of vigilance. To promote education amongst them, and to discountenance vice ; to diffuse habits of order, diligence, and virtue amongst them ; to inculcate upon each that we are inhabitants of two worlds, and to live ourselves in the consciousness of being so, and manifest it by a thorough regard for right ; to delight in manifesting in the texture of life the golden and silver threads of love and wisdom from the Lord, these are the spiritual duties which will sanctify the lives of the princes of trade, and when the spirit is languid from walking on the dusty road of life, let them come to the waters, and they will find streams of consolation, elevation, and blessing. Let them come, and take of the water of life freely.

The operative too is invited. There is a rich store for him. He has the grand faculties which constitute a man, as fully as any other class. To do his daily work from a spirit of justice and judgment is to live for heaven, and the rich stores of heavenly wisdom which are at hand for him, will be a full compensation for the lack of many things which are prized by the wealthy as contributing to the adornment of life, but add very little to its substantial bliss. They who possess heavenly wealth and interior splendours, will in the other life possess the corresponding external, full of glory and of beauty. But the angels think little of outward things there, except as the shadows of the

internal blessings of goodness and truth. The true workman in the upright performance of the uses of his employment is of far higher value, and preparing for a far happier life in eternity than the poor-souled trifler who has no generous sympathies with his kind, no wish to arrive at brilliant thoughts, no desire to promote the active uses of the world; but because his personal wants are provided for, by the accumulations of his fathers, is content to live a useless idler, and die simply to end a life without result, and appear in the eternal world miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Let the nobler workman lift up his head, and feel that he is promoting God's will in enriching the earth and cultivating his mind. Let him with love to the Lord and charity to all mankind, diligently perform his labours, making his work genuine and good; thus doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with his God, and as he walks, "Let him take of the water of life freely."

Those Christians are invited who, like the good Dr. Watts, pray for more light respecting the Holy Trinity, and other important subjects on which they feel perplexity and shade. In these living waters they are all cleared away. The Trinity, raised above the divisive idea of separate persons, shines forth in strict harmony with the divine unity, and the all-comprehending Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The atonement He effected is seen to be Infinite Love, God in Christ, reconciling man to Himself. All the painful obstacles to an enlightened faith are removed, and while we are thoroughly and lovingly spiritual, we are also able to be thoroughly rational and thoroughly scientific. All that is within us, all enlightened and filled with the hallowed spirit of true religion, may bless His holy name; who forgiveth all our iniquities; who healeth all our diseases; who redeemeth our life from destruction; who crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Come then, ye humble souls who desire only to know the Lord more, that you may serve Him better, "Come, and drink of the water of life freely."

Those non-Christians are invited who have deemed it a duty to stand off from what seemed to them irrational, and contrary to the teachings of science, who yet yearn for a light to comfort them in the troubles of life, and to illuminate the world beyond the grave. Here such a light is given. A new city clear as crystal has descended from God for the souls of men. All its teachings are the profoundest reason, the truest science. Be earnest in the love of the truth, and patient in its investigation. Sit no longer in the valley of the shadow of death. Come to the light of life. You will see the divine laws unfolded from

heaven, revealing the operations of unbounded love and wisdom, so promoting what is good, and overruling what is evil, that you will be able to say from your inmost souls, "He hath done all things well." The Word which has appeared to you contradictory, or in its letter beneath the majesty of the Allwise, when opened in its spirit you will confess to be divinely beautiful. The stone is taken from the well's mouth, and the flock of the Great Shepherd may drink; come and satisfy your inward thirst; come, and give the angelic appetite within you the deepest, fullest satisfaction; "Come, and take of the water of life freely." Let every one of us say, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon thee."

No hindrance exists; there are no favourites to the exclusion of others in the sight of Him, whose mercy endureth for ever. He has opened eternity to give you this everlasting light. Infinite love says, Come; heaven and the Church say, Come. Every good mind that has already heard, says, Come. "Let him then that is athirst come, and take of the water of life freely."

The disclosures of Divine Wisdom in the New Jerusalem are infinite. They constitute an unbounded treasure for all. They are the discovery of a new universe, and a richer one. They bring us acquainted with a new heaven and a new earth. They are mines inexhaustible, from which we may dig gems of ever richer beauty. They brighten this life while they prepare us for the better one. They give us stores of consolation when we droop. They assure us of the friendship of unutterable love. They say, incessantly, when we are faint and fear we are forsaken, "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, but I will not forget thee."—Isa. xlix. 15. The manifestation of infinite love by the descent of the Lord, and all His acts of redemption, unfold the tenderness of our Saviour to us, so that we have an evidence of His care, beyond doubt, and beyond dispute. He who descended from heaven to earth for us, will descend to every need we have. He who died for us, and rose again to life for us, will never forsake us. He has provided for our every want. He has described in His Word our temptations and our defences, our trials and our means of triumph; the states through which we shall have to pass, and their sublime terminations; and when we have walked the valley He suffers us, at times, to ascend the mountain and see the glorious land before, like Moses, from the heights of Pisgah. Let us, then, go to the living streams, and drink of their glorious waters freely. Heaven

and the Church invite us. Rejoicing that the night of ages has passed, that a new morning has dawned upon the world. Glorifying the Lord, that a new and glorious city, glittering with pearls of truth, and gold of love, has spiritually descended from the Lord, whose light His glory is, and in which the Word, as a river of wisdom, flows with ineffable brightness, like liquid silver, they give the earnest invitation to mankind, Come. Every one who has experienced the blessedness of walking in its light, is invited to echo the angelic welcome, and say, Come. Every one, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, in every station and in every condition of life, who is athirst may come. Only one thing is needed, that the comer shall will to take of the water of life. Unless this ruling principle of the soul is engaged, no saving effect is produced, no angelic mind is formed, but if he will, "let him take of the water of life freely."

It is given FREELY. The Lord's mercies are given from the bounty of free and infinite love. They are all free, as the rays of the sun, which shine on the evil and the good. They are free as the rain, which descends upon the just and the unjust; as the air, that is the common breathing element for all. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all his works. Creation is given freely. It is the free outpouring of infinite benevolence. The sun shines, and pours the rich streams of his heat and light throughout his system freely. The moon and the stars cheer and beautify the night freely. The grasses, flowers, and fruits are all poured, by the Divine hand, from plenty's copious horn freely. All the faculties we possess of mind and body, which open to us two worlds full of unending profit and delight, are imparted freely. What have we that we have not received? Redemption and salvation too are free gifts. They flow from love and pity. God bought us with a price, the price of all He did and suffered, and we have nothing to pay. We are freely forgiven, freely saved, and freely prepared for heaven. All our blessings in the regenerate life are given freely; but they must be accepted freely, and all freedom is from love. Let us, then, constantly pray and practise, that we may have more will for heavenly things. The Lord gives a renewed will as we keep His commandments. If we have but feeble desire, still let us obey, and that desire will increase, so that we shall find our love growing with practice, will become so full and so strong that we shall mount up with wings like eagles, we shall run and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint. Let not the divine mercy say of us as He did of

the Jews of old, "Ye WILL NOT come unto me, that ye may have life." But, on the contrary, let our wills co-operate with the Divine Will, which gives freely. Let us receive freely, and we shall learn that He has come not to take our joy away from us, but that His joy may be in us, and our joy may be full. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

SERMON XXXVII.

NOAH, THE PATRIARCH OF NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS: WAS HE AN INDIVIDUAL OR A COMMUNITY?

"And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth."
—Gen. v. 32.

"And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died."—Gen. ix. 28, 29.

IN the discourses on the early chapters of Genesis illustrative of the spiritual sense of the Word as arising from the opening of the Divine narratives of Creation, Paradise, the Fall, and the Tower of Babel, we noticed that purely allegorical history extended in the Scriptures to the history of Abraham, that is through the first eleven chapters of the Bible. Thus the geologist need not distress himself to harmonize his science, which teaches that the earth has existed for an immense though definite period, and in the formation of its strata has numbered millions of years, with the account in Genesis, which speaks of the Creation in a week, and only six thousand years ago. The Bible narrative is a spiritual history contained in natural language. And so is it with Eden, and the other great subjects of the early Word. They were never intended to be literal history. They belong to the teachings of a higher wisdom. They were written in the manner of the wiser ancients, who saw in all nature the types and correspondences of spiritual and divine things. And here, if we keep to the letter, we shall find it the letter that killeth; here, it is the Spirit only that can give life (2 Cor. iii. 6). It is proposed, before closing this series of discourses, to apply the same principles to the sacred accounts of Noah, the Flood, the Ark, and the Rainbow, for great difficulties arise from viewing these as the natural man views them, and these difficulties never can be removed but in proportion as we bear in mind "that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii. 14.

The natural man may display himself in religion as well as in irreligion. The natural man in irreligion denies the divinity

of the Word altogether; the natural man in religion acknowledges the Word in name to be the Word of God, but treats it in precisely the same style as if it were a human production. The rule of the natural man is, to make much of its letter, and rest in that, if it be possible, satisfied with incorrect science, feeble reasoning, and narrow views. He evidently goes on in the idea that the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity, and has formed immortal man for heaven, is as much concerned with earth-born inquiries and ideas as he himself is. He thinks that to inform him on subjects of science is the proper object of Divine Revelation, and he must admit no other or higher sense anywhere in the sacred page, unless there is an express text declaring that it has, in that particular place, an inner meaning. The natural man will abide by the husks of nature as long as he can; yet how much better would it be to hunger and thirst after the kernel of the Spirit. Let us, my beloved hearers, regard the Word as the ladder which leads to heaven, and then we may haply perceive angels of God ascending and descending upon it.

In the history of Adam we have shewn it was not an individual which was treated of, but a church, represented as a man. The elevation, temptation, and fall of humanity, in general, are unfolded by the lot of Adam in Eden, his dealings with the serpent, and his expulsion from Paradise. "Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam."—Gen. v. 2. Under this name, and in the short but wonderfully significant history of the first man and his descendants, the first church, with its offshoots, is delineated. These people, who are represented as living nearly a thousand years each, are types of the communities which existed in the golden age. That most ancient church, like all other great churches, had sects and varieties which were its generations, its sons and daughters. Each name, with the hundreds of years of existence, describes in the brief divine style some state and quality belonging to that church. And when it sunk altogether with gigantic lusts, and immersed in floods of falsehood, it was succeeded by another church represented in the Divine Word by Noah.

The great length of life enjoyed by the early patriarchs, so called, is to some a thing of wonder and miracle, to some, food for unbelief. Noah, with his nine hundred and fifty years, has occasioned great perplexity to thoughtful men who have not been aware of the divine style of writing. To the worldly man, no doubt, it has seemed a great privilege to live so long, for worldly life with him is everything: not so, however, to him who is convinced that heaven is higher than the earth, and the

life of angels is better than this life of toil below. For him "to live is Christ, but to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21. To him it would be no privilege to remain a thousand years in this valley of time and tears, as one not permitted to enter his glorious home. He will not be anxious to cling to the idea that when men were better they were kept so much longer on earth than now. He will not be disposed to admit strange and unnecessary miracles and deviations from the usual order of things, but be rather inclined to enquire if what seems to be so may not be understood in some more rational way. He will not find it too difficult to think that as the church is one body before the Lord, though consisting of millions of members, so its life may be described as the life of one man, however long the period assigned to it may be. The Jewish Church is generally described in the singular as Israel, although it subsisted for fifteen hundred years. It was the manner of the ancients thus to group all of one sentiment, as if they were one being. It is derived from the Divine Wisdom, which views heaven as one angel (Ps. xxxiv. 7), the church as one body (1 Cor. xii. 37), a nation as one individual, as Assyria (Ezek. xxxi.), a heresy as one polluted form (Rev. xvii. 5), legions of infernal spirits as one devil (Mark v. 9).

In treating upon the garden of Eden, the two trees of life and of knowledge, the Serpent and the Fall, we have noticed that the Hindoo ancient books, and others which go up to the most remote periods, have mythological accounts, which, though somewhat different in their form, are similar enough to shew that their meaning is substantially the same as the spiritual sense of these subjects in Genesis. No Christian would take these accounts in other ancient books to be literally correct. Many would reject them as mere fabulous and unfounded stories: and there are not a few who do the same with Genesis. But this is not philosophical nor satisfactory. These accounts must have had a better origin than the love of falsehood, or they would never have been received and held sacred for thousands of years. The people who receive and cherish these books are among the slowest to receive anything new, and we have no right to conclude that their fathers could be duped more easily. The idea that they were given at a period of the world's progress, when men delighted in spiritual wisdom, and clothed it in natural imagery, makes it easy to see how they were conceived, how they were received, and how afterwards they became misunderstood by their being naturally interpreted, although in their origin they were spiritually meant.

We find the same similarity with Genesis, as to the ages of

the early fathers of mankind, in Egyptian, Chinese, and Hindoo mythologies. The first kings of Egypt, according to their traditions, reigned each more than twelve hundred years. In the Chinese books it is related that the primitive ancestors of mankind lived eighteen hundred years. The Hindoos, however, assure us that in the golden age the period of man's life was eighty thousand, and at its best period one hundred thousand years. And one of their holy kings was two millions of years old when he began to reign, continued on the throne for a million of years, and then spent in retirement one hundred thousand years more.* No one in Christendom, certainly, would adopt these numbers literally, and yet, probably, they had a meaning well understood when they were written. Just so it is with the long ages in the early part of Genesis; they belong to the allegorical period, and like all the particulars related of the personages treated of, are to be understood in a spiritual manner. The apostle Peter, after having alluded to Noah, and the ark, and the eight persons who were saved, says, "The LIKE FIGURE, whereunto baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. iii. 21. He describes Noah, the ark, and the flood to be a FIGURE, and a figure of the same signification as baptism, that is, of purification from sin, and the work of regeneration.

This mode of viewing Noah as a figure, not as an individual, does not make the Word less instructive, less definite, or less worthy of its Divine Author, but more, it fills every sentence with interest and meaning. Where we had only a curious, and to many an unimportant and improbable story, we obtain an insight into the spiritual history of mankind; and while we discern states which have their parallels in our own souls, we have laid open to us that great and wide-spread movement in which originated all the ancient pre-Mosaic religions of mankind.

There are many considerations which would lead us to take Noah, not as an individual, but as, like Adam, a type of a church, if we consider the Divine narrative well, besides those which will arise from our further considerations respecting the flood and the ark, which we trust, it will be seen, are only to be spiritually understood. For instance, does it consist with individual life to suppose he would live for five hundred years without having any children? Yet we are informed Noah was five hundred years old, and then his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born.

* See Buckle, vol. 1.

Again, as Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, he must have been living still for nearly sixty years after Abraham was born, for his birth took place, according to the dates in the eleventh of Genesis, two hundred and ninety-two years after the flood. But if, in Abraham's time, so wonderful a phenomenon still existed as these thousand-year old people, who lived hundreds of years before the flood, is it to be conceived that we should not have had them noticed, and their sayings chronicled? Is it possible to be imagined that with these witnesses still living, the only men left from the flood, that their descendants would have all become idolaters, as the ancestors of Abraham are acknowledged to have been? To us it seems inconceivable. Such remarkable persons would have commanded world-wide attention. Every history of every nation would have spoken of their sayings and doings. They, too, would have been the embodiment of all the learning, the literature, and the science of the world, before the flood. Their lives of hundreds of years after the great catastrophe would have afforded ample opportunity of unfolding their stores to their descendants. But no, not a single ancient history out of the Bible refers to one of them, or to any saying of theirs. On the contrary, several great nations can be traced up to very nearly the time of the deluge, and no mention of these extraordinary individuals. If they were individuals this would seem inexplicable; but if they are names representing a new church among mankind after the former had set in a flood of iniquity, the difficulty vanishes. Rollin traces the history of the Assyrians up to little more than a hundred years from the supposed date of the deluge, and is extremely puzzled to find them then a great empire, with immense armies of millions of foot and hundreds of thousands of horse, with numerous cities, and making war upon other and distant countries numerously populated like themselves. The Chinese annals go beyond the supposed date of the flood, and are represented as a great nation at a more ancient period, with no mention of any universal deluge, or of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, persons who must have been their own ancestors, if this portion of Scripture is to be literally interpreted.

The earliest portion of the Hindoo sacred books, the Rig Veda, is admitted by scholars to be at least as old as the time of Abraham, and they evidently imply that then the Indian empire was large, a high state of cultivation attained, and the Brahminical system greatly developed. At this time Noah and his sons must have been alive, and been their venerated fathers if they were individuals, but there is no mention of any such indi-

viduals. The learned Bunsen himself, a sincere Christian, remarks: "We have no hesitation in asserting at once that there exist Egyptian monuments, the date of which can be accurately fixed, of a higher antiquity than those of any other nation known in history, viz., above FIVE THOUSAND years" (Egypt, p. 28); that is, nearly a thousand years before the date of the universal deluge. But monuments, which exhibit the arts in great perfection, imply a nation's previous existence and cultivation for hundreds of consecutive years. Yet these monuments give no account of, and make no reference to, Noah or Shem, Ham or Japheth.

The allusions made to a deluge we shall notice in the next discourse. From all this we may, at least, see that we are quite open to inquire whether that is the only interpretation of these early histories which is, at least, surrounded with difficulties, or if there be not a more excellent way. We think there is. The spiritual sense removes the difficulties, and itself presents admirable lessons concerning man's regeneration and interior life, fraught with instruction and edification. Let us examine it in this point of view.

And, first, let us remark that the name of Noah, which is the Hebrew for CONSOLATION, is indicative of his representative character, especially if taken in connection with the other names of the generations from Adam. These are Seth, which means placed, and refers to the somewhat restored condition of the Most Ancient Church after it fell; then Enos, sick, which speaks of its still being in a declining state, and Cainan, lamentation, carries on the sad result. Then we have Mahalaleel, the illumination of God, and Jared, he who commands, and Enoch, whose name signifies dedicated. These three indicate a revival in the declining church, an arrest of the decay by the power of truth, the illumination of God, and a stay for a while of the manifest corruption; but because it was chiefly from truth, and the love underneath was not restored, the apparent improvement again gave way, and we have Methusaleh, which means, sends his death; and Lamech, the last, whose name signifies poor, and is expressive of the utter spiritual desolation in which a fallen church ends. Noah then, or consolation, represents those who would form the nucleus of a new church, the germ of a new age.

We shall endeavour to shew in the two following discourses on the flood and the ark, that the catastrophe described in the Divine Word was not an inundation of outward water, but a flood of direful false doctrines and principles, such as always abound at the end of a dispensation of religion, but they had a

peculiar malignancy from the awful lusts out of which they arose. And, of course, if it be proved that the flood was the abounding of terrible false persuasions and grievous errors, those who were saved from these will be such, be they few or many, as are disposed to love and obey the truth. Such, in the general wreck, are the receivers of interior comfort, and the source of comfort to others. These enter into the provided ark of a new system of doctrine which preserves them. And while there is ruin all around, these are saved by infinite mercy, shut in by Almighty love, and ride through the turbulent billows of abounding falsity to the sweet haven of a peaceful rest. We need not suppose, from Noah being used in the singular, that one individual is meant. The Lord's Church, whether consisting of many or few, is spoken of as one; sometimes as one man, sometimes as one woman. There is a parallel, both as to the flood and the preservation, furnished in the fifty-fourth of Isaiah. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."—Chap. liv. 9—12. Here, and often elsewhere, the Church is addressed as a woman, threatened by a flood, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." Many individuals are represented by that one form; in fact, all who fly from the torrents of impurity around, to the truth and goodness revealed to them by the Lord of heaven.

Of these, it is said, he called his name Noah, saying, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed."—Chap. v. 29. And by these words is meant that by means of this New Church the difficulties of cultivating the soul would be overcome, and spiritual rest would be attained, for another signification of the word Noah, is rest.

The Lord (Jehovah) is said to have cursed the ground; but we must bear in mind that the Lord never causes ground or anything else to be cursed; He only declares it to be cursed when sin has made it so. The ground is the mind, especially as to the affections which ought to be cultivated so as to bring

forth beautiful sentiments and righteous acts. These, like lovely flowers and goodly fruit-trees, make the spirit like "a watered garden."—Isa. lviii. 11. The good ground, the Lord said in the Gospel, is "an honest and good heart."—Luke viii. 15. When a church has become perverted, and bitter is called sweet, and sweet bitter, evil good, and good evil, even by the rulers and teachers of it, then to cultivate the heart is a toilsome and heavy work. The soul suffers great discouragement, regeneration is slow, laborious, and almost impossible. The weeds grow, and the grieved spirit has scarcely courage to attempt their eradication. Thorns and thistles almost everywhere abound, and we scarcely can dare or hope to overcome them. The Lord seems far off, and we dwell in a desert. When the Son of man shall come, shall He find faith in the earth? is true of every coming. There may be much of what some people call faith, that is self-derived confidence in some phantasy of theirs; but faith in the Lord as the God of goodness, faith in Him as the God of commandments which must be obeyed, faith in Him as the present ruler of the world, faith in Him as One whose will must be done, now, and by whom the heart and mind must be renewed and regenerated, now,—this faith is always extremely small when spiritual floods are threatening, and the work of religion is full of toil and weariness. When a New Church, however, begins, that proclaims afresh the true character of the Lord and of His kingdom; and while it declares that man must be born again, and must grow up to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, assures us of His daily and hourly help, as our Saviour and Regenerator, this Church gives comfort to the toilers, gives them hope in their work, and while they still have tribulation outwardly, in the Lord they are blest with peace. Such a Church is Noah; they are directed to make an ark, and they will be saved when others are submerged.

Noah is said to have been just and perfect, or upright, in his generations, and to have walked with God, and these three qualifications are the essentials of every church. Justice is expressive of the essence of goodness, uprightness of the clear acknowledgment of truth; while walking with God is undoubtedly said in relation to the activity of a good life. These three are the essentials of all religion. When one of these essentials is truly present with man, the other two will be present also. We cannot be just in the will without also directing the intellect to revere and seek the truth, and if we really revere the truth we shall bring it into practice. We speak sometimes of faith alone, but in reality this is an impossible thing. He

who does not love goodness will not love truth, which always leads to goodness, and he who does not love truth will not really believe it. He may outwardly assent to it, but in his heart he denies it. And he who neither loves truth, nor really believes it, will not bring it into practice. If a man live a good life in appearance, but has no love of goodness nor reverence for the truth, he may seem to be virtuous, but in the sight of the Lord will be a hypocrite. His good works will in reality be evil works. The Church called Noah, then, as possessed of the true essentials of religion, the trinity of heavenly virtues, is described as just, upright, and walking with God.

Besides Noah himself, there is mention made of his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives, who went also into the ark and were saved. These three represent the general features into which the church of Noah divided itself. Churches have sons and daughters just as individuals and just as nations have. Each sect is as a son to the church out of which it sprung. Thus, out of the Church of Rome, sprang the Church of England, the Lutheran and the Calvinistic Churches. From the Church of England arose the Puritans, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Independents, and all the numerous sub-divisions which, as children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren have originated from her. These, as they have the same essential principles as the groundwork of their faith, namely, the doctrines of three Divine Persons in the Deity, the punishment of one of these to pacify the anger of another, against man's sin, and the salvation of man by imputation when he believes this is done for him, they may all be regarded as one family sprung from the lineage of Rome. This may serve to illustrate that vast family of churches which spread over the immense regions of the east at a time beyond the period of history, but which originated the sublime ideas and emblematic worship which still lingered in the world among the priests of Egypt, the magi of Persia, and the followers of Brahma when the earliest annals we now possess served only to catch their last feeble rays as they were setting in the darkest forms of idolatry.

Some of these rays yet faintly shining are preserved in the wonderful dialogues of Plato, and others in the writings of Hermes Trismegistus, who has that profound saying, "All things on earth exist also in the heavens, but in a heavenly manner, and all things in heaven exist also on the earth, but in an earthly manner."

Shem and Japheth appear to represent those portions of the ancient church who were actuated by that charity which hideth

the sins of others, as manifested by their conduct in covering the nakedness of their father. Ham is clearly the representative of such as know indeed what is right, but use that knowledge rather to expose the failings of others than to hide or to heal them. These differences in their representation are manifest from what is said of them in a later part of the history (chap. x. 22, 23), and on which we shall subsequently dwell. We name it here only to give a complete idea of what is meant by Noah and his three sons. In every church there are similar distinctions among its members to those intimated by these sons of Noah. There are those who invariably love the Lord, and worship Him from inward affection. These are meant by Shem, the elder brother. They give a character to the church, and their name means Renown. There are also those who are more external in their goodness, who know, like the apostle, that they have passed from death to life because they LOVE THE BRETHREN (John iii. 14), but whose love is more ardent in following out the second commandment than the first. They are pleasant to live with and pleasant to see, and their name Japheth means Goodliness. There are those again who are critical in matters of faith and knowledge, but cold. These are devoid of the essential spirit of religion, but nevertheless are mixed up with others in the church, and are not without their usefulness, but they are often thorns in the sides of their kindlier brethren. Their name Ham signifies Dark or Brown, and when the spirit of one who is fonder of frowning with blame than of smiling with hope and love, is seen, no doubt the term dark will be tolerably expressive of its nature. But in this life the church, though an ark of safety from the devastations around, does receive and long retain in her bosom all three, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Noah then with his sons composed the church in those days. They had the qualities of those whom the Lord can save, to whom a new dispensation can be given, and out of which a new generation can be formed. We shall, in the next discourses, trace their movements and their salvation in the ark, but at present we must be content to keep our attention fixed upon Noah. The grand difference between the whole dispensation represented by him and that of which Adam was the symbol was what was expressed by the terms common over the whole ancient eastern world, the golden age, and the silver age; Adam (red ground), with his Eden, in the language of Scripture symbolizing the same as the poets meant by the golden age; Noah with his vineyard being, when spiritually understood, what expressly answered to the beautiful appellation, the silver age. The first,

from its interiorly holy character, has been appropriately styled the celestial church ; the second, because the spirit of truth was rather the leading principle they followed than the perfect love which casteth out fear, has been called the spiritual church. This is what is described in the declaration, when it is written that Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard (chap. ix. 20), for to cultivate a vineyard is a common mode in the Word, both in the Old Testament and the New, of representing the cultivation of truth. It arises from the vine in its growth and in its results, imaging the growth of faith in the soul, and the virtuous works which, on the one hand, proceed from so holy a stock, and depend upon it like goodly clusters of grapes ; and, on the other, the cheering and delightful truth which, like heavenly wine, it pours into the weary soul. Thus the Lord speaks in Isaiah, " My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein, and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant ; and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression ; for righteousness, but behold a cry."—Chap. v. 1, 2, 7. Here the choicest vine will evidently mean the choicest doctrine. In like manner the prophet Jeremiah speaks, " Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed : how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me ? " And in the Psalms, the bringing of the Jewish church out of Egypt is spoken of in similar language, " Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it, thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of Hosts : look down from heaven, and behold, visit this vine."—Ps. lxxxix. 8—10, 14. The Lord in the New Testament obviously recognizes the correspondence of the vine when He says, " I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away ; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing."—John xv.

1—4. Here the great Saviour, manifestly under the image of a grand vine, represents His whole Church as deriving life from Him by a living faith, ever raising them to greater vigour, purity, and abundance of goodworks. The wine we have mentioned as the corresponding object to the cheering truths of faith. "Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"—Judges ix. 13. The wine that cheereth God must be the truth that saves His creatures. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."—Isa. lv. 1. Water, wine, and milk are obviously the correspondences of purifying and cheering truth, and of those simple lessons by which also we can feed all that is innocent in ourselves and give to others the sincere milk of the Word (1 Pet. ii. 2). The Saviour spoke of the same holy wine of heavenly truth when He said to His disciples, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."—Matt. xxvi. 29. These illustrations enable us abundantly to see that Noah's becoming a husbandman and planting a vineyard in the divine style of speech is descriptive of the state of the church represented by him, when they gave themselves to the cultivation of their minds by means of the doctrines of religion. They had no longer inward intentions and perceptions which were enjoyed in a better age, but they nevertheless sought by doctrinal training to arrive at it. The blessing of having heavenly wine to drink, of receiving those angelic counsels and consolations which are afforded by the spiritual sense of the Word, is so great that he who enjoys it may well exclaim with the Psalmist, "Thou anointest mine head with oil, my cup runneth over."—Ps. xxiii. 5. Man takes of angels food. He who has learned to perceive the divine love and wisdom in all texts and teachings of the sacred pages, because he has united in himself an enlightened faith to a fervent love, he has already had the water turned into wine. He feels its power and its pleasantness, and he is careful to receive it into the new bottles of a regenerated mind. His renewed spirit from day to day is prepared to rejoice in more holy out-pourings of everlasting wisdom, and he finds a generous joy stimulated constantly by the opening to his delighted feelings of the Divine love in all its infinite varieties of blessing. He rejoices to see how Infinite mercy has provided for him in the Word, in the heavenly kingdom, in the constant helps by which he is restored when he has been weakened, and beaten down, and has faithfully promised

to do so in all his future course. He feels that the Lord has not come to take his joy away from him, but that the Divine joy may be in him, and that his joy may be full. He has come that man may have life, and that he may have it more abundantly. While he is rejoicing over these gracious openings of heavenly wisdom, he cannot but sing in the fulness of his heart, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now."

But, alas! even in good things it is possible there may be abuse. There may in spiritual as in natural things be too much feeding and too little working. We eat and drink to live; we do not live to eat and drink. But those who are represented by Noah seem, as has too often in the Church's history been done, to have forgotten this important truth; hence we are informed "he drank of the wine, and was drunken." Spiritual drunkenness is more terrible than natural, it is being besotted with phantasies and errors, inflated with self-derived intelligence. When a person neglects practical religion, and forgets the humility of heart, which fills us with distrust of ourselves, he is on the highway to some infatuation. He begins soon to be impatient of contradiction, goes from one paradox to another until no conceit is for him too absurd. Errors of the most fearful kind creep in. He will have all the world be occupied with some small idea of his, and if they are not disposed to pay as much deference to it as his vanity has led him to think it deserves, he will regard them with uncharitable dislike. He will deride and condemn them. He sees his one thought everywhere, and in everything, and thus by exaggerating what may be true in itself, to an undue proportion, he shuts out other truths, and makes some form of monstrous fallacy exist, where the fair proportion of a complete and well-formed faith ought to be. Thus comes spiritual drunkenness. In this state we are never steady. We reel to and fro like a drunken man. We roll from phantasy to phantasy, for the sake of preserving our idol thought, until we lose sight of the great essential of religion; and instead of charity being our central principle, self-love of the basest kind is seen. Thus was it with Noah. He was drunken, and was uncovered within, or in the midst of his tent (ver. 21).

This spiritual drunkenness is often alluded to in the Scriptures. When that terrible lust of dominion over human souls, which became so awfully dominant in the fallen Christian Church, was foretold by John, it was portrayed by the image of a fearful woman, in whose hand was a cup full of abominations, by whom the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication (Rev. xvii. 2). To be made drunk is to

be besotted with her errors. Those who are thus besotted say the greatest follies, and do the most absurd things, yet without themselves being aware of it. They are drunk with their own conceit, infatuated with their own inflations. The Egyptians, and especially their king, are so described by the prophet. "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit."—Isa. xix. 14. Some become spiritually intoxicated by making the Word of the Lord subject to their self-will, and so perverting it. Others, however, are drunk with pride, and disdain the Word. There are persons who are infatuated with the idea that they are beyond all others wise, because they busy themselves with worldly gain and sensual pleasure, and are never troubled about religion. With them all wisdom consists in heaping up for to-day, in gathering for themselves enough to purchase ten thousand times more than they will ever need to eat, drink, or wear, in the life which is to us all uncertain, and make no provision for that life which is everlasting, and into which we know not how soon we shall certainly enter. These latter are they whom the prophet speaks of when he says, "They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink."—Isa. xxix. 9. Such persons think they are wise, but are in the deepest folly: they imagine they are beyond others awake; but as to their highest interests are in a deep sleep. To such, the apostle addressed himself when he wrote the words, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—Eph. v. 14.

Vanity is the secret cause of all spiritual drunkenness. Self is its centre. When a person deems his every thought a certain truth, because it is his, he is liable to catch at the first appearance of things, and decide at once, when a humble state would have led him to pause, weigh, and consider. The true spirit in which to learn the truth is the spirit of meekness; "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach his way."—Ps. xxv. 9. But the self-confident dash forward and dogmatize. They never distrust their own judgment. They never suspect that they can be wrong. They decide offhand, and expect that their judgment will unhesitatingly be accepted. If others have considered a subject beforehand, and come to a decision, they will make a point of differing, and hurrying to an opposite conclusion, however absurd it may be. These are they who become spiritually intoxicated. Such persons, also, having no solid ground for their conclusions in a humble per-

ception of the truth, not only err grossly on one side, but after circumstances have revealed their errors, not unfrequently plunge as far into extremes on the other side. "They reel to and fro like a drunken man." Theirs is the state which was experienced by Noah when he was said to be drunken; and the discovery of the self-hood, which forms the soul and essence of such a state, is meant by his being uncovered in the midst of his tent.

This uncovering, or revelation of the interior character, is often alluded to in the Divine Word. The Lord in the Book of Revelation refers to it. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the SHAME OF THY NAKEDNESS do not appear."—Chap. iii. 18.

Ordinarily the selfish are at great pains to cover themselves with appearances and pretexts. We have an instance of this in the case of Adam and Eve. When their eyes were open to their real fallen state, and they knew that they were naked, (that is, were conscious of their having sunk into self-hood,) they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons (Gen. iii. 7). The fig-leaves represent the lowest forms of truth, such as they are in the letter of the Word. These may easily be arranged so as to cover any state, however evil. Every false religion is only an immense covering of the nakedness of the soul, and an elaborate device to put a fair face upon what is intrinsically bad. A man who clings to self, still wishes to be saved, and he will hatch or favour any scheme that promises him salvation without the subjugation of self. He will believe he can be saved by confession to a priest, if he can be flattered with forgiveness, while his inner desires remain the same. He will take up the idea that by believing it will be so, he can have the Saviour's righteousness put down to his account, and be justified by it, although he have none of the practical righteousness of shunning evil and doing good. Although he has never washed his robes, he can put on the Saviour's robe, and all will be covered in divine purity. There are, however, times when revelations of the interior character of such states are made. There are periods when the infatuation of such persons is so palpably great, that they lie exposed, as it were, to the eyes of all. Their opinions, perhaps, are combatted, and they become maddened with rage. Their views are at times so palpably disproved, that they can only reiterate they will have it so, right or wrong. Their obstinacy, insolence, and wrong-headedness are manifest to all. They lie exposed in the midst of their tent. Such was the declining

state of those meant by Noah. They sin, and their sin is made manifest. But how differently they are treated by different characters. They are first observed by Ham. We have already noticed that this son of Noah represents those who have faith, so called, and knowledge in the church, but who are destitute of love and charity. They see the nakedness of others, but instead of aiding them, or shielding them, they tell it to their brethren without. How sad it is that so much of the Ham spirit remains to the present day. It has been said, and not without some ground, that dwelling upon the failings of one another is the besetting sin of churches. Yet nothing can be more odious or more destructive of true charity. The Spirit of heaven leads the angels to attribute good to every one, as far as possible, and if there be evil to excuse it as much as can be. The spirit of evil accuses, attributes an evil motive even when good is done, and magnifies the least failing so as to make it a serious fault. Evil spirits are called the accuser of the brethren. "The accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."—Rev. xii. 10. This accusing spirit is typified by Ham, and is often connected with a fair amount of learning and talent, but, alas, with the desire of raising itself at the expense of others. Indisposed to advance in purity and heavenly-mindedness, those who are represented by Ham cannot bear to see others esteemed better than themselves, however justly it is their due: but if they gaze upon the sun, they mark only his spots; and if they desire so much to detract from the virtues of others, it is a perfect jubilee to them to detect a fault. They mark it well; they see that its blackest features come out; they publish it far and wide. Alas, at the same time they know not how much they are proclaiming their own deficiency in that highest of Christian graces—angelic charity.

There are several particulars of an interesting character yet unnoticed, so that we must, from want of room, defer the continuation of the subject to the next discourse.

SERMON XXXVIII.

HAM, NOAH, AND THE FLOOD.

"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark."—Gen. vii. 11—13.

We were compelled to leave some portions of the Divine history of Noah in our last, unfinished, and before going broadly into the wide field of the Flood, and the Ark, we must resume, and briefly notice them so far as to give suggestive hints to the reflective. The subject is too great to particularize. We left the subject with Ham, who had told his brethren of the unhappy state of Noah. This we saw was indicative of the Spirit which notices failings in others only to blazon them about. The brethren are those who are in goodness. They listen to Ham, but for a very different purpose. They are of the two classes of such as are in goodness.

Those who are actuated by love to the Lord, and worship Him direct from inward love, and those whose highest attainment is love to the neighbour, and who worship him because He enables them to love the brethren, these are brothers. They are joined by the brotherly principle. And their mode of treating the faults of others is beautifully delineated by the conduct of Shem and Japheth. "They took a garment, and laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness." They took a garment, means that they took such a view of the case as would excuse and cover it. They took the mantle of charity, which covereth a multitude of sins, and spread it over what they did not wish to see. They went backward, not desiring to gaze upon what they knew to exist, but which they were unhappy to know. They placed the mantle on their shoulders, that is, they covered what they desired to have concealed from the public gaze, with all their might. Whatever

men are described in the Word as doing with vigour and strength, they are said to do with their shoulders. "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the *shoulder*, and stopped their ears that they should not ear."—Zech. vii. 11. There is a beautiful use of this correspondence in the prophecy of Zephaniah, which is obscured by the word shoulder being erroneously rendered consent. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one shoulder."—Zeph. iii. 9. When, then, the efforts of these loving spirits are described, who desire to excuse, not to accuse, they are said to go backwards and carry the mantle on their shoulders. How blessed it is to exercise this heavenly spirit of healing, and how much room there is almost always for its display. We know sometimes the evil which is done, but not how much is resisted. We know not the power of the temptation under which a weak child of humanity has sunk. We can take slight cognizance of neglected education, want of religious training, want of the sweet influence of early love, want of sound knowledge, perhaps, of the definite nature of good and evil, and the consequences of both. We know little of the vicious circumstances under which a sinner may have succumbed, circumstances internal as well as external. All these considerations should make us deal gently with the erring. And one other thought should confirm us in this determination, namely, that love is the grand reclainer. Under threats and harshness the sinner hardens himself, and under love he softens. Let an erring one see that you love him and desire to do him good, and if there be any good in him, it will be powerfully affected. Proud defiance has often been turned into weeping penitence at the gentle touch and voice of active love. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—Matt. v. 7. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."—Luke vi. 36.

"O never let us lightly fling
The barb of woe to wound another;
Oh let us never haste to bring
The cup of sorrow to a brother.

Each has the power to wound, but he
Who wounds that he may witness pain,
Has learnt no law of charity,
Which ne'er inflicts a pang in vain.

'Tis God-like to awaken joy,
Or sorrow's influence subdue:
But not to wound, nor to annoy,
Is part of virtue's lesson too.

Peace winged in fairer worlds above,
Shall lend her dawn to brighten this;
When all man's labour shall be love,
And all his thoughts a brother's bliss;—

This spirit of hiding another's fault, if possible, is not only portrayed by the conduct of Shem and Japheth in covering their father, but its blessed influence in promoting his deliverance from his fault is intimated by the divine words following immediately after, "and Noah awoke from his wine." Many awakenings would come about sooner than they do, if the subjects of them were treated in the spirit of Shem and Japheth. Let us earnestly pray continually to be saved from laying any stumbling-block in the way of a brother's return to a state of heavenly wakefulness, by our being wanting in that Spirit which casts a veil over his infirmities.

There is, however, something very remarkable which follows, and with this we must conclude our present review of the Divine Word in relation to Noah. It is said that when he saw what Ham had done to him, Noah said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."—Gen. ix. 25. This has been extremely perplexing to all interpreters of the letter alone, on many accounts.

The perplexity in relation to the curse of Canaan arises, first, from the circumstance that Ham himself should not be cursed, although he was the offender, but his son, and not all his children, but the youngest son Canaan only. If we are to suppose the curse as coming from the Divine Being, it would also have the additional difficulty of being contrary to the Divine Law. "The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."—Ezek. xviii. 20. A variety of conjectures have been offered, but none which have arisen from the letter only have afforded a satisfactory solution. The chief offender escapes, and another is punished. Some have thought that Canaan was the darling son of Ham, and the father was punished in him to wound his dearest affections. But our feelings revolt from attributing such refinements of malice to the Best of Beings. We have not yet arisen to the knowledge of our God, if we have not learned that He is Love Itself, and punishment comes from sin, not from Him. Whether Ham or Canaan was cursed, it would arise from their own deformity of character, not from any primitive action of the All-Merciful. Others have imagined that Canaan was in some way abetting his father, but of this there is nothing in the text. This is departing from the letter, not to go to a spiritual sense, but only to invent a new literal reading. This is indeed adding to the Word of God. But the fulfilment of this curse of

Canaan, considered literally, is attended with equal difficulty. The nations proceeding from Ham were far more powerful than the Israelites, taken as the race of Shem, ever were. From Ham were the mighty Assyrians, with the great capital of Nineveh, whose remains exhumed anew, command the astonishment of mankind. From Ham was that mighty Babylon, which ruled far and wide, and counted Judea among its least important tributaries. From Canaan even arose imperial Sidon, and Tyre, and the merchant empire of the Sidonians. Only after a thousand years could there be any pretence of a literal fulfilment of this prophecy, and then only of a portion of the race of Canaan, when the Israelites took possession of their land. And even to make this imperfect fulfilment, we must take Canaan as the type of his race, as we take Noah for the type of a Church. No individual Canaan became any such servant of servants to his brethren. Let us, however, look higher.

Ham, we have seen, is representative of those in the Church, at that time who were in the faith, but were wanting in charity. Now, such are not cursed in themselves, and may, if they unite their faith and knowledge to charity, become blessed. But when faith without charity does not unite itself to charity, and so make itself one of the family of heaven; but, on the contrary, goes on producing sects and differences more and more external, it settles into a mere form of outward worship, without any inward life or light. Such a dead form is what Canaan, Ham's last son, represents. The name denotes a trader. It is a mere superstition. To such a form of dead works may belong the vilest people in the world, and they often do. The tyrant, the covetous, the deceitful, the hater of his neighbour will attend the church, and the sacraments, but they are only hypocrites. In such external worship, self still reigns with all its lusts and passions. Monsters of cruelty and avarice are often its most diligent devotees. But such worship is cursed by the presence of these interior impurities of an inner hell. Even with those who are not inwardly impure, but only uninquiring and dull in their worship, such unintelligent religion as theirs is the lowest of all low things, a servant of servants is Canaan to his brethren. It should be the effort of all to raise their fellow men to an enlightened faith, and loving worship. We should cleanse, first, the inside of the cup and the platter, that the outside may be clean also. "We should arise and shine, for the light is come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon us."

Before we conclude, the numbers of the years of Noah's life must have a slight notice, though the great subject of the spiritual sense of numbers is too vast to be treated of here. We may

remark, however, that Noah is said to be five hundred years old when we meet with the first mention of his name; six hundred years old when the flood came, and he continued for three hundred and fifty years after the flood.

The addition of hundreds or thousands makes no difference in the spiritual signification of numbers, since all increase in extent is only the repetition of the same principles as form the commencement. Five hundred, therefore, signifies the same as five, six hundred, the same as six, and three hundred and fifty the same as three and a half. Five reminds us of the five wise and five foolish virgins, and represents a Church such as it is when it has received and comprehended the truths delivered to it and is about to bring them into practice. Its light and experience are small, and are represented by the number five. Six reminds us of the six days of labour, and is especially appropriate to describe the Church when about to undergo the severest toils of temptations; while three hundred and fifty, or three and a half, is indicative of a full end represented by three, which, derived from the Trinity, always signifies what is full; and a half which represents the commencement of a New Church. Three and a half, under various forms, is frequent in the book of Revelation, and always refers to the full end of one dispensation and the commencement of another. It is in agreement with this rule that Noah is said to have died after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

Such are some of the instructive lessons which are taught in the Spirit of the Divine Word respecting Noah. Let us ponder over them, and learn.

We come now to the consideration of the flood itself. What was its nature? What were its circumstances? Was it of water or of wickedness? Those who have not reflected much on spiritual things are startled even at the mention of a spiritual flood, although the thing itself is not at all unknown or unfamiliar. They have been so long accustomed to the vulgar idea, and are habitually so persuaded of the value of natural life, that although the destruction of virtue and truth by torrents of iniquity is far more appalling to the wise, to the heedless it seems of little moment. Not so, however, is it regarded in the Word of God. Throughout its divine pages a spiritual flood is treated of as the soul's most awful calamity. And we may here notice, that a spiritual assault of evil and error is undoubtedly meant by the term, flood, in a very large number of passages in the Scriptures. No other meaning could be attached to the expression. How manifest this is in the Book of Psalms every one must have

noticed. Take, as a striking example, the sixty-ninth. "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into *deep waters*, where the *floods* overflow me."—Ver. 1, 2. Again, "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me."—Ver. 14, 15. Here there is a cry which nothing but the agony of the bitterest temptation could produce. Not the death of the body, but the fear of the more terrible death of the soul could awaken the agonizing expressions here uttered. "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul." In the eighteenth Psalm we have something of the same kind. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me."—Ver. 4, 5. And a little further: "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of strange waters."—Ver. 16. These are evidently entreaties of the soul under bitter trials, which are described as floods of water. Such language, with such signification, is very frequent in the Scriptures; and the states it portrays belong to the experience of all, except those who yield themselves willingly to sin, and go constantly along with the stream. The Psalmist says again: "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."—Ps. xxxii. 6. In earthly floods, the righteous have no peculiar exemption. They are objects, like all others of divine care, for eternal ends; but while in ordinary life people recognize a great Providence in their escapes from danger, a wider and deeper view of Providence would reveal the truth that there is a Divine care and mercy over those drowned at sea, or dashed to pieces on a railway, equally with those who rejoice at being unhurt. "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."

The end of a Church is often in the Word described as accompanied by a flood, though certainly not by one of outward waters. Where the end of the Jewish Church is predicted by Isaiah, it is mentioned as being accompanied by the fearful circumstances of a flood, although no one supposes that such a catastrophe outwardly occurred. This is strikingly so in the twenty-eighth chapter. "Behold the Lord hath a mighty and a strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the

earth with the hand.”—Ver. 2. “Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the bail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the *waters* shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.”—Ver. 15, 17, 18.

The prophet Daniel describes the end of the Jewish Church, which was completed by the crucifixion of the Lord, in like manner as attended by a flood. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a *flood*.”—Chap. ix. 26. A flood of impieties, falsehoods, and delusions there was then, but we are not aware of any other. Such floods are adverted to by the Lord in the Gospel as assailing every one. The good come out of them, or ride over them; the wicked sink and perish. “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the *floods* came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sands: And the rain descended, and the *floods* came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”—Matt. vii. 24—27. The floods alluded to in both portions of this divine description of the temptations which must be endured in the discipline of life, are, as every one will admit, those influences which impel the soul to wrong; those assaults which like surging waves come again and again to try the principles of all; and under which such as trust in their own opinions only, and do not rest on the Rock of the Divine Word, will too surely fall. Similar floods of falsehood, it will be admitted, are meant when it is said, on the birth of the man-child, as mentioned in the Revelation,—“The serpent cast out of his mouth *water as a flood* after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”—Chap. xii. 15, 16. *A flood*

from the mouth of the serpent can surely only be understood to mean a torrent of erroneous teachings, destined, if possible, to discredit the New Church meant by the woman, and the sublime doctrine she has produced for the world. It is, then, the undoubted usage of the Sacred Scriptures to represent under the figure of a flood, the streams of false and destructive errors which prevail at the end of a Church with the utmost virulence, and also at some period in the career of every man are permitted to test the sincerity and fixedness of his religion.

There are three sources of flood mentioned in our text: the "fountains of the great deep," the "windows of heaven," and "the rain." How far my hearers may be able to represent to themselves the meaning of these words in relation to an outward flood, I know not, and do not now stay to enquire; but in times of spiritual struggle there are opened awful deeps within man, which send up malignant, loathsome persuasions, scalding hot, which would hurry the soul to ruin. The deep-rooted selfishness of the fallen heart says, "There is no God."—Ps. xiv. 1. The wicked bravado of insolent pride says within his heart also, "There is no fear of God before his eyes."—Ps. xxxvi. 1. The horrid cravings of sensuality beg for their indulgence with importunate yells, and the poor soul knows hardly what to do. "Deep called unto deep at the noise of the water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me."—Ps. xlii. 17. The windows of heaven are the rational faculties of the soul. These are given to let in heavenly light. In an orderly state they are indeed the windows of heaven. The divine light of truth shines freely in. They are the eyes of the soul. But in sore temptation, at these same windows, false reasonings enter. Infidel spirits, perhaps infidel books, and infidel friends supply waterspouts of specious conclusions, all at the time seemingly powerful, weighty, with much truth in them, but all dishonouring God, and degrading to man. Logic, appearing to the sad and darkened mind irresistible, seems to prove evil good, and good evil, religion to be only superstition, heaven a dream, hell a bugbear, virtue a farce, and all the glorious order of the universe a mere fortuitous jumble of atoms, brought together by blind chance, or equally blind necessity. Added to this, there is the rain, the unceasing pattering of false teaching from companions, and associates plying the Spirit day by day with the scornful word, the vile jest, the wild jeer, the frequent invitation, the constant persuasion to wrong-doing, and often the bitter denunciation of the virtuous as hypocrites; the withering sarcasm, which, like storms of hail, comes down on the wearied, almost

despairing soul, with cruel force; all these make a storm—a flood of overwhelming force. Happy is he who has a heavenly ark at hand, in which he can take refuge, and be saved.

Let us imagine a situation in this great city, by no means rare. A young man comes from the order and quietude of a secluded, virtuous home. He has been trained to respect everything sacred, and has often himself experienced high and holy communings with heaven. The Bible has been to him the unquestioned Book of Life. He was cradled in its reverence, and the hymns he first heard from his mother's lips seemed to him like an angel's songs. He comes, however, to business, and finds himself side by side with persons licentious in thought and manners. He is introduced, perhaps, to books, written by parties who have given talents of transcendent excellence to prove that man is the creature of circumstances, has no pre-eminence over a beast, has no knowledge of anything higher than his body, and the whole mystery of iniquity, which renders the way broad, which leads to destruction. While he is thus assailed from without, inclinations to evil, deeply rooted in the lusts of his fallen nature, reply to the enemy without by traitorous attacks within. These, like the Amalekites of old, watch when the soul is faint, weary, and despairing, and strive to push it over the precipice of doubt into the abyss of recklessness. How needful in such circumstances is it for the young man especially to remember the words of the poet—

"Thou tread'st upon deceitful ground,
Perils and snares beset thee round.
Beware of all! guard every part!
But most the traitor in thy heart!"

While the great movements, without and within, from the windows, and the fountains of the great deeps are infesting him, the daily talk of those around him; the incessant seizure of anything evil in the affairs of the world; the weakness of some, the hypocrisy of others, the errors which have been too successfully mingled with religious doctrines, and which often place them in seeming antagonism to science, when they never really are; all these make a threefold series of attacks, under which tens of thousands fall, and which can only be defeated by the spirit's taking counsel from Him who is "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest."—Isa. xxxii. 2. Such have a divine ark provided for them; the Ark of true religion. If they enter into that, no danger can harm them.

At the end of a church, the flood assumes fearful power. Books of an irreligious character abound. The Church has first

perverted the truth, and taught the traditions of men from the commandments of God. Puerile superstitions are common, from which the reason of mankind revolts. Morals are relaxed. Religious teachers are too often unworthy of their name and office. They have devised some scheme which they call religion, which dims the holy light of that truth which says, "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." Streams of iniquity flow far and wide. A godless clergy and superstitious doctrines are there. Others originate a philosophy which tries to make the universe a self-acting machine; a science very learned and very laborious, but learned and laborious about trifles; dwelling for ever on forms of speech, but overlooking the sense, the soul of speech; solemnly and devotedly engaged on worms and butterflies, on the affinities of atoms, and the measurement of angles, but seldom entering upon those aspirations of the angelic nature within, which raise us from creeping through this outer life the denizens of a day, to soar into the glorious regions of light and love, which give us affinities with the holy and the true of all ages, and enable us to take the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.

Thus was it in the middle and latter half of the last century. Iniquity abounded. Love waxed cold, Faith was scarcely to be met with anywhere. Works of amusement were disgustingly vicious. From royal circles down to the poorest hovels, vice under ten thousand forms, reigned almost unchallenged. Alison, the historian of that period, thus describes it: "Man's connection with his Maker was broken by the French apostles of freedom: for they declared there was no God in whom to trust, in the great struggle for liberty." "Human immortality," says Channing, "that truth which is the soul of all greatness, they derided. In their philosophy man was a creature of chance, a compound of matter, a worm soon to rot and perish for ever. The revolution, with its disasters and its passions, its overthrow of thrones and altars, its woes, its blood, and its suffering." In the general deluge, thus falling upon a sinful world, the mass of mankind still clung to their former vices. They were, as of old, marrying and giving in marriage, when the waters burst upon them, but an Ark of Salvation had been prepared by more than mortal hands. The hand on the wall had unlocked the fountains of original thought. (Chap. lx.)

Here, then, we had a deluge—a flood, making an end of old things, and preparing for a new state in Christendom. And here was fulfilled the prediction of the Saviour: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; *the sea and the*

waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."—Luke xxi. 25, 26. This will illustrate what we mean by the question, as to the flood of Noah, Was it of water or of wickedness? We wish, first, to bring our minds to look definitely at a spiritual flood, that we may perceive that in professing to consider the flood as one of the series of those remarkable events narrated in the early chapters of Genesis, which are to be understood as sublime descriptions of the rise, career, and fall of the Church, told by the Divine Wisdom in the ancient manner, we are not lessening the importance of the sacred teaching, but rather drawing from its fulness instruction which will be of service to every individual when the floods come to him, as well as to shew to every age that though "the floods have lifted up, O Lord (Jehovah), the floods have lifted up their voice: the floods lift up their waves: the Lord (Jehovah) on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." (Ps. xciii. 4.)

If we take the flood of Noah to be like the floods we have already adverted to, we shall find that there were some special circumstances about it, which gave it a fearful peculiarity of its own. "There were giants in the earth in those days."—Gen. vi. 4. Monsters of guilt were these, produced from the admixture of truths from heaven,—“sons of God,” with odious lusts, the “daughters of men.” In the kingdom of the soul, heaven and hell were blended, and results were produced, such as we can only faintly conceive. This mixture took place from the pollution of those who knew better. It was the sons of God who saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they chose their wives from them. The Lord says, the good seed are the children or sons of the kingdom (Matt. xiii. 38). When these, forgetting their high origin, debase themselves to purposes of hypocrisy, vileness and passion, terrible productions are born. Giant sins stalk abroad in the earth of the human soul. In these days we have the delusion of the Salt Lake, a giant of this class, in which the office of the prophet has been united to knavery and lust, and monstrous forms of guilt affright the earth. There were also numbers in ancient times, and it is said now to be reviving across the Atlantic, of those who seek to have communion with the dead, who rush into divine things, but depraved and atheistic in heart, and are reproducing the abominations of heathenism with supposed divine sanction. They take the echoes of their own phantasies from spirits like themselves to be the utterances of messengers from heaven. Such awful perversions

make giants of impurity and folly. Such were the Nephilim, which is the word translated giants, and derived from *nephil*, to fall. And it is a singular circumstance, which they who hold close to the letter would do well to ponder, that the men who brought an evil report to the Israelites, calculated to intimidate them, said, "And there we saw the Nephilim (the giants), the sons of Anak, which come from the Nephilim (the giants)." Only here, and in Genesis, are there giants of this class mentioned. And if these were from the Nephilim, or giants before the flood, it is evident that some of these must have lived on in bodily life, however spiritually dead.

Such were the enormous corruptions into which the posterity of the most ancient church, or Adam, fell, "that God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."—Chap. vi. 5. "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart."—Ver. 6. That is, even Divine Mercy could permit them to continue a church no longer. The Lord cannot repent, because He never does wrong (Numb. xxiii. 19). But when the divine operations, though still for a merciful end, change from being agreeable to us, and become afflictive and disagreeable, it seems to us that the Lord repents, and changes, but it is only an appearance, He changes not (Mal. iii. 9). The Lord, it is written, said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."—Gen. vi. 7. And, again, "God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." The Lord is said to save and to destroy; to kill and to make alive; yet doth the same fountain at the same place, as James says, send forth sweet and bitter? (chap. iii. 11.) "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceeded not evil and good."—Lam. iii. 38. He is the Father of lights, IN WHOM there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning (James i. 17). But though the Lord is unchangeable love in Himself, and nothing but the purest mercy and light are His Holy Spirit, yet its effects are various according to the conditions of those upon whom it operates. Like the light of the sun, which pains the owl, the light of heaven is abhorrent to the evil. When truth is proposed, they pour forth falsehood. The states of the wicked are like a powder magazine, full of explosive material. When influences from heaven touch them, they rage, they foam, they

writhe with pain, they pour out on every side blasphemies and falsehoods in torrents. And, because this excitement follows the coming of Divine Truth, it is said the Lord brings it. When the Saviour, the Prince of Peace, came upon the earth, He knew He came not to bring peace, but division. To the peace-loving He brought peace. But to the selfish Sadducee, the sanctimonious hypocritical Pharisee, His words were the excitements to perpetual indignation. The storm raised in them by the presence and utterance of Truth became daily more and more fierce and tumultuous, until they never met him but with envy and rage. The waves of opposition tossed more violently as malice lashed itself and its partizans into greater fury; and at length, bursting all bounds, they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and hurried Him to death. Thus alone is it the Lord brings destruction. There is no destructive material in Him; but in coming to save the good, He necessarily excites the bad. They fly against His omnipotence, and fall. The Lord, in coming to found a New Church at the end of the Adamic, by His unfoldings of Divine truth and goodness, excited the deeps of incredible passions and abhorrences, provoked the whole power of delusive reasonings, and excited oppositions the most unremitting, until a flood of unheard of malignity and extent was called forth, sweeping in its destructive career all that was sacred and truthful, all that was virtuous and pure, all that was moral and decent, into one wild whirlpool of impiety, impurity, and madness. This was the deluge; a far more destructive inundation than any mere flood of waters, and one that entails most surely the loss of both soul and body. Such a flood prevails at the end of every church, although each has its peculiar virulence. Its billows have to be endured by every man, and hence the importance of the lessons it teaches in the spiritual sense. To study it is no vain thing; it is our life.

But, it may now be asked, why do you not receive the account of the Flood as commonly taught? Why not accept it in the letter, as well as in the spirit? We admit the spiritual meaning as you propose, but why not the letter also? To this we reply, We have dwelt thus on the spiritual sense first in this discourse that it may be seen that, although we consider the divine account of the Flood to be allegorical, we by no means make less of the Divine Word than others, but, in fact, more. We perceive immeasurably more in it than mere literalists admit, but we cannot accept the natural interpretation of the history, because we do not believe it was ever so intended to be understood. It is part of the series which describes spiritual creation under natural imagery, trees of life

and knowledge, talking serpents, and a variety of other particulars which cannot be reconciled with reason or with science; and we have no doubt that true theology, true reason, and true science are in harmony. They come from the same divine fountain.

Many, however, will admit the spiritual signification of the flood to the fullest extent, but will ask, Why not consider it literal also? Inasmuch as the general rule is, that the letter of the Word contains history literally true, why not the same in this instance? To this we reply, that there is everywhere a literal sense to the Word, but that sense varies in its style; it is sometimes allegory, sometimes history, sometimes precept, sometimes prophecy, sometimes praise. The outward sense of the Scripture, like the outward garment of the Saviour, consists of various parts, and could be divided: the inner sense, like the inner garment, is all of a piece throughout. In the letter, the Word was given to each people in the mode best accommodated to them, and in the early ages allegory was what they loved. They gave spiritual history in natural forms. Hence, we have the account of the formation of the church, like the creation of the world; we have trees of life and of knowledge, and a speaking serpent. Hence the origin of parables, and mythology; and to this class of writing belongs the flood. But, again, it may be asked, why not consider this history, in particular, literal? We answer, why not consider the account of the trees going forth to choose a king, as mentioned in Judges, chapter nine, literally true? You will answer, it would be absurd to think so. Such a conception would not be in harmony with our ideas of divine wisdom. It would be needless, foolish, and extravagant to do so. So we reply, in relation to the flood. The geologists inform us that there are no vestiges of a universal flood visible on the earth. The celebrated Professor Buckland, of Oxford, once thought otherwise, and wrote his work *Reliquiæ Deluviana*, but he recanted his opinion, and himself condemned his former conclusions. Professor Sedgwick, of Cambridge, also declared that there were no appearances in nature from which to arrive at the conclusion that there had been a flood affecting the whole earth, during the period of human existence. On closing his career of Professor, he said, "Our errors were, however, natural, and of the same kind which led many excellent observers of a former century to refer all the secondary formations of geology to the Noachian deluge. Having been myself a believer, and, to the best of my power, a propagator of what I now regard as a philosophical heresy, and having more than once been quoted for opinions I do not now maintain

I think it right, as one of my last acts, before I quit this chair, thus publicly to read my **RECANTATION**. We ought, indeed, to have paused before we first adopted the diluvian theory, and referred all our old superficial gravel to the action of the Mosaic flood: for of man, and the works of his hands, we have not found **A SINGLE TRACE** among the remnants of a former world entombed in these ancient deposits." With the remarks of these eminent men we might leave the subject, so far as the science of geology is concerned, but we will add, that no eminent geologist of the present day can be quoted for a different opinion. Hence, many persons who cling to the literal account of the flood, seek to escape the chief difficulties now, by urging, as Dr. Pye Smith does, that it was a limited flood, extending only over a part of Asia, and have collected a vast number of facts to shew that the flood could not have extended elsewhere. But this is departing from the letter of the record, which states, "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die."—Gen. vi. 17. "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were **UNDBR THE WHOLE HEAVEN**, were covered."—Chap. vii. 19.

But if the flood were not an universal one, why spend a hundred years to build an ark to escape from it? Why not walk out of the district which it would affect? Why, too, collect beasts, and especially birds, to preserve them in the ark. A partial flood would not extinguish them, and scarcely affect the birds at all. The substitution of a partial for an universal flood removes some difficulties, but leaves others of a very grave character; and is itself a departure from the letter of the Word, without giving us anything of a spiritual lesson. Some cling to the literal account of the flood, because they find traditions among many ancient nations of such a calamity having happened. But this would be the case from a vast spiritual deluge. If a wild overspreading of malignant follies and falsehoods took place, and an inundation destructive of all that was sacred among men existed, this, in the ancient manner of speaking, would be called an universal flood, and in after ages, when the spiritual meaning was forgotten, would be supposed to have been a flood of earthly waters. This is clearly the case with the Hindoo tradition. It was translated by Sir William Jones from the *Bhagavat*, and is the subject of the first *Purana*. It is sufficiently like the Bible account of the deluge, to shew that it alludes to the same great event. It is said to have taken place at the close

of a calpa, or dispensation, when there was a general destruction, owing to the sleep of Brahma, and his creatures in different worlds were drowned in a great ocean. A holy king, by name Satyavrata, is saved by the appearance of the Deity in the form of a fish (scientific truth), with a great horn (power), who slays a demon, and recovers the sacred books. This remarkable tradition concludes with these words: "But the appearance of a horned fish to the religious monarch was maya, or delusion, and he who shall devoutly hear this important ALLEGORICAL NARRATIVE, will be delivered from the bondage of sin." Here, then, we have a key to all these traditions. The most perfect of them all states that it is an allegorical narrative. This is in perfect harmony with our view of the flood in the Bible: removes every difficulty, and gives us a spiritual divine lesson.

But, if any one still clings to the literal narrative, let us ask, have you duly reflected that such a flood as you conceive would require a new creation of water, and afterwards its annihilation, of which the Scriptures make no mention. For, although the deluge is ascribed to rain coming down forty days and forty nights, yet rain is only the pouring down on the earth of the water which has previously been raised out of the sea. The fountains of the great deep are said to have been opened, it is true, but fountains only bring up again the water which has sunk from a wide surface, and from high ground. Neither of these add to the water on the earth. But all the water of all the oceans and seas only suffice to fill up the present hollows, and if evenly spread, the best philosophers tell us, would not be more than a mile deep. To make a deluge deep enough to cover the highest mountains, that is, be more than five miles high, there must be water IN ADDITION to all the water now on the earth, which only fills the present depressions, equal to many times more than at present exists in all the oceans and seas of the earth. And of this not a word exists in Holy Writ. Such a stupendous miracle, too, would be quite contrary to all Divine operations, so far as we know them.

The further consideration, however, of the subject we must defer until our next, and, for the present, close by the grateful confession of the Psalmist: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth."—Ps. cxxiv. 1, 5, 6.

SERMON XXXIX. .

THE ARK.

"Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above: and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it."—Gen. vi. 14—16.

WE come now to another important portion of our subject, in considering the meaning and the circumstances of the flood. If we have given satisfactory reasons for considering the flood itself to have been such a deluge as threatens the soul of every man at some part of his spirit's history, and was peculiarly terrible at the end of the best and earliest church which prevailed among mankind, we shall find still further confirmation in pursuing the other portions of the divine narrative. We are now also very favourably situated for our present argument, for we are able to compare the capabilities of the ark to afford comfortable accommodation for its human and bestial inhabitants, as illustrated by the great ship, the *Great Eastern*, now being prepared in the Thames. This vessel is nearly a fourth larger than the ark, its tonnage being 22,500, and that of the ark 18,000 tons.

One general principle, which we think will hardly be disputed, we venture to assume; which is this, That if God provided a refuge from the flood, it would be a proper and satisfactory one. He does all things well. If the ark was a natural ship, it would be constructed on the best principle: there would be size enough, light enough, and air enough to accommodate all whom it was designed to contain. If it does not answer these requirements, when the history is literally understood, is it not wiser to ask if the sacred writing has not some other meaning, rather than either reject it as the word of God, or to reject our reason in matters of religion, and thus lay ourselves open to any absurdity, however wild?

It is true a person may say, That God, being all-powerful, could put any number of animals and their food into the ark,

whether it was large enough or not. But with such reasoning it would be impossible to shew that there was any need of an ark at all. The animals might have been kept safe and snug at the bottom of the sea as well as in an ark that would not hold them. A gentleman who had overlooked the divine invitation, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord,"—Isa. i. 18, once remarked in a sermon: "God could have put all the animals of the earth in a thimble if he had thought fit;" but such a person would find it very difficult to object when a priest of another faith told him that God the Saviour puts Himself, soul, body, and divinity, into the wafer that lies on the communicant's tongue. Such persons affect to disdain reason, and yet it is remarkable how readily they hold with it when they suppose they can use it in their own favour. In fact, religion is not only the best, but the most reasonable thing in the world. It is light for the mind. And when any one proves his doctrine or view of Holy Writ is not reasonable, he proves it to be not true, not from God. When a reader, who thinks only naturally, reads that God commanded Noah to make an ark to save him when the flood came, he mentally says, Yes, that was very right, very proper, very reasonable; and he is satisfied. But if he finds on further examination that the ark would not hold the animals, or was totally unfit to sustain life, would he not be impelled to think there must be some other way of understanding the narrative rather than that he ought to attribute anything absurd to the All-wise Creator? This, then, is precisely the view we wish to enforce. Let not any one imagine, that in proposing difficulties in regard to the letter of the Word, if naturally understood, we in the slightest degree wish to lessen his esteem for it as a revelation from God. We only say as the apostle did. Here, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."—2 Cor. iii. 6. When we rise from the letter to the spirit we shall rise to a perception of the true wisdom of the Word, as we have never seen it before. We shall see that the thoughts of God are as much higher than our thoughts, as heaven is higher than the earth.

We have mentioned in our discourse on the flood, that to suppose it took place literally, we must not only admit that one miracle was wrought, but such a crowd of miracles that the mind staggers at their number and character. And when we see, after all, that the literal arrangement would have been so thoroughly absurd as would have rendered such an attempt at this day absolutely ridiculous, it becomes inconceivable. According to the letter, seven days, chap. vii. 4, before the entry into the ark, the command was given that a male and a female of all

animals should be taken into the ark, with some modifications which we shall notice later. The ark would be situated in a district between the Tigris and the Euphrates. The animals would have to come from all the regions of the earth, however varied, and however distant. The polar bear, the arctic fox, and the other tribes of the cold regions must make their way over the sea at Behring's Straits, and down the wild steppes of Asia, contrary to their instincts, and to all the laws of their being; over thousands of miles they must go in a week. The lama of Peru, the black tiger of Javv, the elephant of India, the monkeys which are peculiar to the great islands of the Indian seas, the kangaroos of Australia, and the great brown bear of Russia must wend their ways, some over seas many hundreds or thousands of miles wide, at far more than railway express speed, to reach the ark of safety. The sloth of Surinam, poor fellow, who with pain gets over a few yards on the ground, would have a hard time of it. The tortoises, too, would be hurried, and even the alligators of Africa would be much moved from their usual habits. Let any one imagine the number of miracles involved in this collection of the animals, and he will doubtless find this portion of the subject a startling one to begin with: the distance to be travelled, the obstacles to be overcome, the short time to accomplish so Herculean a task, and the total contrariety to the natures of the great part of them involved in their coming to one spot, and all being placed in one confined vessel in a warm region of the earth.

Next, we must not forget that there was no ventilation provided for in the ark. There was only one opening for a door, and the door was shut after Noah entered. Now, fresh air is as essential to life as food or water. In one night, a few hundreds, in the Black-hole at Calcutta, shut up in a close room, but having one small window open, were so affected that only a few were found alive the next morning. And if you go to see the *Great Eastern*, you will find openings made all round her to admit the fresh air, so necessary to life and health to every part of her; but we are to believe, if the narrative of the flood be literally taken, that many thousands of creatures were shut up with no air at all let in to them for twelve months. A person may say they could live without air, but so he might as readily say they could have lived at the bottom of the sea without harm, or perched upon clouds for the twelve months, but all that goes to make the ark, which Noah was a hundred years in building, quite a superfluous thing. We have such a view of the perfections of God, that we are persuaded that if He made a vessel to

save his creatures from drowning, it would not be to subject them to the horrors of suffocation ; it would be in all respects a model of ventilation and salubrity. Since this was not attended to at all, if the history of the ark is to be literally construed, we are persuaded that the literal sense is not the true one.

But, there was also to be only one narrow window, eighteen inches wide, and that at the top (chap. vi. 16). There could, then, only be a little light in the upper story, and the two lower ones would be absolutely dark. Let any one picture to himself these two stories, filled with thousands of creatures, all in darkness, and without air for twelve months, and ask, what would be their sanatory condition? Had it been stated they had been all subjected to hydraulic pressure, and hermetically sealed for the time, the defenders of the letter, and nothing but the letter, would have had a better case. But to keep them with their faculties awake, and to give them food, chap. vi. 21 : to confine them in the dark, to feed them, but without air, or any provision for purification, is so utterly absurd that no rational thought can admit it for a moment. Only let any one now suppose that the *Great Eastern* were only furnished with one window, eighteen inches wide, and not furnished with any other light or opening, and ask himself, Would it be possible for any person to sail in her for a single day? and then put the matter home to himself, Can I persist in attributing to the Allwise what would be unutterably absurd for man?

We come, now, to consider the size of the ark, as proportioned to the multitude of her inhabitants. The *Great Eastern* for a short voyage, it is said, could take ten thousand men: for the voyage across to India she is fitted for four thousand. But the ark would be required to carry her passengers for a year, and food, it would seem, for two, for there could be no subsistence until after a new harvest had been grown subsequent to their leaving the ark. This food would take up more room than the absolute cubical measurement of the animals themselves, for in twelve months any living creature will consume more food than is equal to its own bulk. The whole space for anything to stand on in the ark would be the length multiplied by the breadth, and that by three; thus 450 feet by 75, and that by 3, equal to 11,650 yards, not quite three acres. Half of this would be taken up by stowage for food, so that one and a half acres would be the whole available capacity for standing room, to say nothing of space for exercise. Now, for comfortable living, the Zoological Society do not deem their gardens, in Regent's Park, too large, and they are forty acres, and the number of animals 1400 only.

These are a very small proportion of the species known to exist in the whole earth, and every year adds to the list of those previously ascertained to be in existence. The mammalia alone are 1700 in number; but, deducting the ruminants, because of these fourteen of each kind were to go in, Gen. vii. 2; Lev. xi. 3; this would give us 3016 individuals at once. Then of the clean beasts, fourteen of each kind, there are 194 species, but omitting the camels, 192, which would yield 2688 additional. Of reptiles there are 1000 species, from the fearful anaconda and boa-constrictor to the meanest worm, giving 2000 individuals. Of amphibia, including the mighty alligators down to the tiniest lizard, 400 species, that is, 800 individuals. The birds were to be fourteen of each kind, and there are of them 7000 species, that would be 98,000 individuals. Of insects alone there are 25,000 known species, and the discoveries of fresh kinds are constantly being made: their name is legion. Now, what have we got? We say nothing of fish, although it is written that "two of every living thing of all flesh shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee."—Chap. vi. 19.

There are of mammalia, without ruminants	3016
Of ruminants	2688
Of reptiles	2000
Of amphibia	800
Of birds	98,000
	106,504

Then come the 50,000 insects, and we may well say myriads more yet undiscovered.

The flesh-eating animals create an additional difficulty, for obviously there was no food provided for them. They must be without, or eat the other animals which were to be preserved, or have their natures changed. But let us look at the numbers as we have them, and endeavour to realize them. We have mentioned, that at Regent's Park there are forty acres used for 1400 animals, but in the ark we have only an acre and a half for 106,504, that is, for nearly eighty times that number. Again: at New Smithfield market the area is fifteen acres. On a full day, when the market is crowded, there are 5000 large cattle and 30,000 small. The animals stand close to one another, and have no space for exercise. In the ark we have many more animals, and a large proportion of them very unpleasant com-

panions, and only one-tenth part of the room.* We must not forget, too, that the way animals can stand in a market is not the way they can remain for a year. We may safely say, they could not in any possible way have been packed in. When, then, we consider the circumstances in which these creatures must have been brought together from their abodes in all parts of the world; over seas, over mountains, over thousands of miles, the manner in which they must again pass over the desolated earth, in addition to the former obstacles to their several proper climates and abodes, involving thousands of miracles: when we consider the suspension of the proper laws of life, and the geographical requirements in the case of every animal during its abode in the ark: when we consider the want of room for a tenth part of them in the ark itself; the want of air, want of light, and want of cleanliness, which must all have to be met by additional miracles: when we consider even the descent of this strange crowd from a region far above that of perpetual snow, we shall certainly be startled, not at one stupendous miracle like that of the flood, considered by itself, but at the thousands of miracles involved, all to be accepted, because the natural man will not receive the Word spiritually, and ponder over its spiritual wisdom. To those who feel these difficulties, we would affectionately advise the adoption of the Psalmist's prayer: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

One law which pervades all divine works is this. They are accomplished in the simplest manner, with the least expenditure of means. How very simple is the human throat! but in its power of harmony it surpasses all musical instruments put together. It is also the passage for food to the stomach, to build up the system, of air to the lungs to purify the blood, and it is likewise a chimney for the rejection of used material from the lungs. Nowhere can we find in human art so splendid an instance of great ends accomplished from small means. In divine

* The ignorance of nature and science betrayed by divines is really astounding. Thus, although the ark was much less than the *Great Eastern*, the former being 450 feet long, 75 broad, and 45 deep, and the latter 690 feet long, 83 broad, and 58 deep, yet while the *Great Eastern* is only of 22,500 tons, Dr. Raphall tells us Mr. Hales observes, "It (the ark) must have been of the burden of 42,413 tons." That is, though much less, it must have carried two and a half as much as the *Great Eastern*.

The same class of writers has always, for several hundreds of years, found the ark just the right size for the number of animals with which they were acquainted. Dr. Raphall again remarks, "It has been computed that all the carnivorous animals which Noah admitted were, as to the bulk of their bodies and requirement for food, equal to twenty-seven wolves, and all other animals equal to 280 oxen." (See his *Sacred Scriptures*, Gen.) He allows, however, equal to 1825 sheep for the flesh-eaters, which would be an addition to our numbers. Such inconsiderate closet-men will still find the ark exactly the right size.

works this law constantly prevails. In the flood, however, understood literally, we find the exact contrary. We have enormous means to accomplish a small result. There is not one miracle only, but a crowd of miracles. We have not the destruction of human beings only, which could have been effected in a few minutes by tainting the air, but the destruction of all the animals, and for what purpose was this? They had done nothing amiss. Then, again, if there be must be a creation of water supposed, by which men must be destroyed, why have the water on the earth for twelve months? Less than an hour's immersion under water is enough to destroy the man most tenacious of life; why create such vast masses of fluid to encircle the earth, and continue it there for a whole year? In the seventeenth day of the second month the flood began, chap. vii. 11, and on the seven and twentieth day of the second month, in the following year, it ended, Gen. viii. 14. Here, then, there would be, if literally understood, a contradiction to all we know of the perfection of infinite wisdom. Then, again, by lying twelve months under water, in violent agitation, what would be the condition of the vegetable world? Yet there are trees growing in the primeval forests of America that must have been growing before the flood, from being, as is known to botanists, much older than the supposed date of the deluge? They must have been destroyed by such an occurrence had it happened. Then, again, it is well known that both animals and plants are governed by geographical laws of distribution. An animal can live in one climate, or under some circumstances, but dies speedily if removed. Some fish, whose abode is fresh water, die if they are touched by salt, and *vice versâ*.

But these laws, so exact and so beautiful, must all have been suspended, and a multitude of miracles have been produced, to make one wild chaos. And for what end? To shew God's power? That is a poor display of power which is done at the expense of wisdom and order. God displays His power in the wonderful operations of every day; but it is in manifestations of goodness, beauty, and perfection. Why attribute a proceeding to God which is the reverse of all this?

On the contrary, by viewing the account of the flood as a description of a great spiritual catastrophe, such as happens at the end of every church, we can interpret all its particulars in a manner to supply the spirit with instruction and warning, which will preserve us when assailed, ourselves, by the floods of temptation.

The Lord is said to bring this flood, because when evil,

falsehood, and hypocrisy, have long made men their own; when deep lusts, horrid passions, polluted imaginations, and gross perversions of truth have reduced human minds into bondage, the divine effort to save the few good who remain produces a violent explosion. Truth, uttered in such a valley of darkness, will act like a spark to gunpowder. Every engine of offence will be brought into play to destroy the unwelcome light. Deep malignant falsehoods will gush forth from the hidden impurities of the soul: false reasonings from those intellectual faculties, which, when in order, are the very windows of heaven, and the constant reiteration of error, like the descent of rain, all bring on a deluge, and will sweep away every soul which has not sought refuge in the divine ark of a true and new church. This ark we shall now endeavour to describe. In it the spirit is safe, and will assuredly learn "that the Lord sitteth upon the floods, the Lord sitteth King for ever."

In considering the subject in a spiritual point of view, we would observe, first, that the ark is a prominent object in Divine Revelation. We have the ark here, the ark of bulrushes, in which Moses lay hid; the golden ark in the tabernacle, and the ark seen by St. John in heaven, Rev. xi. 19. Hence, we may be led to notice, that the ark is a type of the church. It is the church which saves man in all spiritual floods. If he is like Noah, just, upright, and walking with God, so far as he knows the Divine will, the mercy of the Lord ever points out to him how he is to make an ark. "Make thee an ark of gopher wood." This wood is a species of turpentine wood, very inflammable. It is the representative of religion, such as it is at first, only a modified selfishness; the religion of hope and fear. We fear the pains of hell; we hope for the rewards of heaven. We fly from outward sin with an energy derived partly from self-love. We fear to be crushed by punishment in the future. We love ourselves too well to remain in danger and in death. We make our ark in terror, to save us from the coming ruin, but we do not make it of heavenly gold, like the ark of the testimony made by Aaron; we make it of gopher wood. That is suited to our state, and it answers the Divine end. It bridges the gulf between us and heaven. We shall make, by divine help, a better ark in time, a golden ark of love. Meantime, it is a blessed thing when we see the wild waves of temptation and sorrow coming, to have an ark into which we can retire, and let the Lord shut us in. "Come, O my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."—Isa. xxvi. 20. The

church, then, is an ark, a refuge sometimes for a generation, sometimes for an individual : and happy is he who enters its protecting bosom.

The wood of which the ark was made corresponds to the low degree of goodness which we are able to enter upon at the beginning of the regenerate life. We resolve to obey the Lord, but in great imperfection, and from very external grounds. We form the best resolution we can to live for heaven, and it is accepted. The gopher tree was a species of fir which readily took fire. And from this circumstance we have imaged the very inferior character of our early spiritual determinations. From the representative character of wood it was, that when the waters of Marah were too bitter for the Israelites to drink, on Moses casting wood therein, they became sweet. Yet, that wood represents good of a comparatively external description, will appear if we ponder over the words used by the prophet Isaiah concerning the Lord's coming to form a spiritual church. "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron : I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness."—Isa. lx. 17. Again : "The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it."—Hab. ii. 11. The stone cries out of the wall when truth speaks, the beam answers when goodness, however imperfect, responds. The ark, then, was to be made of gopher wood, and though it is only a temporary and frail abode while peril is around, yet, by divine mercy, it will preserve the threatened soul until a more perfect and free state can be attained. "Thou shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." This covering is indicative of the earnest affection with which man must regard the church, both in love and life, that the Divine protection may be with him. His affections, compared with what they will become, are only as pitch compared to gold ; yet the Lord will protect if the heart is set on fleeing to a purer state. If, with our affections, dark and impure as they are, we repent and follow the Lord, He will accept us, and wash us again and again, until "our sins, which were as scarlet, shall be white as snow : " and those which were red, like crimson, "shall be as wool." A similar lesson of divine goodness and condescension to our imperfections, is taught by the black horses mentioned by the prophet Zechariah. The black horses which went into the north country "have quieted my spirit in the north country."—Chap. vi. 6, 8.

The dimensions of the ark, which are drawn from the numbers three and five, for it was to be three hundred cubits in

length, thirty in height, and fifty in breadth, imply, in the spiritual sense, that we are saved and restored by truth, for three is used in the Word where truth is chiefly treated of, and seven where goodness is the leading feature. The goodness which truth insists upon is implied by the length; the holiness which truth teaches, by the height; and the small expansion which the mind has in truth, when just escaping from the torrents of iniquity, is taught by the breadth being expressed by fifty, a number derived from five. It is only after the struggle of temptation is over that we can say, "I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large (broad) place."—Ps. cxviii. 5. It is only when regeneration has had its perfect work, that the glorious Lord becomes a place of broad rivers and streams (Isa. xxxiii. 21). Until then our spirits are straitened, and it is enough if we can hold ourselves close under the Divine wing until the awful inundation has passed by, and we can take up the expressive words, "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."—Ps. lxvi. 12.

The ark had three stories; "with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it."—Chap. vi. 16. Real religion has always three degrees, both as to its virtues and its truths. Here, the three stories represent the three degrees of truth which have place in the Lord's church. There are the truths of faith, those intellectual convictions within, which raise the soul to an interior confidence in the Lord and His heavenly kingdom, these are in the upper story: there are rational truths, or those which come in to shew that the determination to live for heaven is justified by every consideration of the laws of the soul, and all divine laws in time and in eternity, these are in the second story: and there are scientific truths, which shew that outward fact and well-being are equally the attendants of religion, with interior purity and the sublime lessons of faith. No heavenly mansion is of one story alone, nor outward alone. "Behold," says the Psalmist, "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." The ark of the Lord has three stories. The window which was to be made in the ark, and which seemed so inadequate when we were considering the ark as a literal structure, becomes a beautiful symbol in the spiritual sense. It is expressive of the intellect open to the light of heaven, and to that alone. "Let thine eye be single," the Lord says in the Gospel, "and thy whole body shall be full of light." The single window, like the single eye,

is the mind looking simply to the divine light, desiring to be led from heaven. It was to be placed at the top of the ark. The light from above is the only sure source of interior consolation, and true guidance. "In Thy light shall we see light." In all the storms of spiritual trouble, happy are they who have ever a window looking upwards. "O thou afflicted," says the Lord in Isaiah, "tossed with tempest, and not comforted, I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."—Chap. liv. 11.

"A door shalt thou make in the side thereof," continues the sacred narrative, for this door represents a communication between the church within, and the world without. It is like the ear, which readily takes in impressions when there is the will to listen, but closes itself against them when there is a disinclination to attend; this door, too, like the ear, was at the side. The window, then, is the type of the intellect, to admit the light, and the door, of the obedience which should govern us, both as to what we receive, and what we reject. "Behold," the Lord said, "I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." While we are mindful of the window, let us never forget the door.

But what is meant by the animals which went into the ark? and what by the unclean going in as well as the clean? To those who are not familiar with the fact that animals are the corresponding forms which express and shadow before the mind the affections and thoughts of the mental world, these questions would be difficult of solution. But to one who has felt in himself principles which are embodied in the animals, the explanation is easy. All the principles of the lower degree of his mind are like all the animals of the earth. Hence it is that we read of the Lord making a covenant with animals. "In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the earth."—Hosea ii. 18. Each animal is expressive of some especial principle which we may recognize within ourselves, and the whole put together would make one great mind. Those persons who suffer some one principle, good or evil, to take the lead, are often called in Scripture by the name of the animal which corresponds to it. Thus the kind and obedient are called sheep: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."—John x. 27. The soaring are called eagles. "They shall mount up with wings like eagles."—Isa. xl. 31. The cunning are styled foxes. "Go, tell that fox," said the Lord Jesus respecting Herod, "that to-day and to-morrow I do cures and

cast out devils, and the third day I shall be perfected.”—Luke xiii. 32. The animals which were taken into the ark, then, represent all the principles of the mind which are taken under the divine protection. But it will be asked, Why take in the unclean, as well as the clean? Why not suffer them to perish? And here a most important consideration is opened to our view. It is supposed by the unreflecting that when the soul becomes converted, and is received into the Lord’s church, it becomes at once altogether pure in the divine sight. It is thought that there is an entire instantaneous change in the whole structure of the mind, and from having been entirely like a world in disorder, it becomes transformed into a paradise of complete order and beauty. There is, however, no greater mistake. Conversion is only a turning to the Lord, to ask his protection, help, and blessing, and a determination to labour in the work of bringing the soul and the life into order. It is at first only fleeing for refuge to Him who can save with all that you have and are. They who suppose that all evil can be cut off at once, know little of the soul, and little of themselves. Evil is so entwined with all the processes of the natural mind, that there is not a spot untouched; that mind is radically diseased, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head. To cut off all evil would be to cut off all the active man; there would be nothing left. It is not so the Divine Physician acts. He takes the case in hand just as it is, gives His safeguard and defence to all who in sincerity apply, and then proceeds to heal as the patient can bear it. The joy of conscious reception is so great, and the welcome given to the returning penitent by the Lord and His angels is so joyous, that the delivered soul itself imagines that it is altogether transformed and pure, but this is a mistake. The unregenerated spirit is wounded, bruised, fettered, and imprisoned. When it sincerely calls upon the Saviour, He appears and sets the captive free, and in the joy of his new liberty he overlooks his own many defects. He has got on the side of the Healer, and in due time his flesh will come as a little child. At present, however, he must go such as he is, with his wild beasts as well as his tame ones; but his wild ones for the time so hushed that not one dares bark or howl. The heart and mind of immortal man are wonderful things. The building which is to endure for ever cannot be destroyed and reconstructed in a day.

“ Nor will I dream that heart and life
 Are in a moment clean;
 But long and painful is the strife
 That must be felt within.”

Such, then, is the meaning of that apparently strange spiritual fact implied in the taking into the ark of two of every wild beast, as well as two sevens of such as were clean and useful. How merciful is our heavenly Father that it is so. Without that salvation would be impossible. The health of the soul, like the health of the body, comes gradually. To throw down is easy, and may be sudden, but new growth is slow. We may make a strong resolution at the beginning of our religious life, that every temper and every act of ours shall be heavenly, but we shall find as we progress, the old temper will now and then appear and press in to be admitted. By patient perseverance in well-doing we can at length effect a complete change, or rather the Lord will make it in us, but by the operation of his divine order, not by any sudden change. The garden of the soul, like a garden of earth, can only with time and perseverance be cleared from weeds and transformed into a spiritual paradise. Let us attend, now, to some of the minor particulars of the divine narrative before us.

The flood increased until, we are told, "the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered."

By mountains and hills, we have repeatedly shewn, are represented the higher affections of the soul. The mountains, the affections of love to the Lord, the high hills representing those of charity towards the neighbour. The righteousness of the Lord is said to be like the great mountains, Ps. xxxvi. 6. And it is only of such mountains that it could be said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills (mountains), from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."—Ps. cxxi. 1, 2. When, therefore, malignant false principles abounded, until there was no perception or acknowledgment of love to God or charity to men as religious duties, the mountains and hills were covered. There is also a remarkable addition made to the statement in verse twenty. "Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; AND the mountains were covered." For, if the former part of the verse meant that the waters were fifteen cubits above the highest mountains, it seems to be quite unnecessary to add that the mountains were covered. In the spiritual sense, fifteen, like five, refers to what is small; and as it includes the number ten, which is used when the first remains of goodness and truth in the soul are signified, the statement assures us that the streams of iniquity had so far increased that the early germs of goodness were obliterated, and

every profession of love to the Supreme was extinguished in contempt.

At a later period we find mountains referred to again. "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat."

There used to prevail the impression in Armenia that on the summit of the mountain, far above the region of eternal snow, known by the name of Ararat in that country, and deemed inaccessible, the remains of the ark still were preserved; but in 1829 its peaks were scaled, and several times since, but no such remains have been found.* How beautiful, however, is the instruction in the spiritual sense! The gradual cessation of the inundation is the subject. The temptation is drawing to a close. The soul has clung closely to its Saviour in all its troubles, until a state of holy rest has been attained. A calm but perfect faith in the Divine Love is the seventh month, and this as to every particular is the seventeenth day of the month. The term Ararat in Hebrew means "lights," and the mountains of Ararat mean the interior lights of divine wisdom flowing into the soul while it is glowing with holy love. Rest always comes when love and light are conjoined within. When mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other (Pa. lxxxv. 10).

If there be any of my hearers who have been suffering from the fearful floods which come in upon the soul, the terrible storms which threaten utter spiritual desolation, cling closely, my beloved brethren, to the ark of Him who sitteth upon the floods; heed not the threats nor the howlings of the storm, however wild and fearful; your Redeemer can and will say to the fearful waves, Thus far shall ye go, and no farther, and in a little time ye shall calmly rest on the mountains of interior light and love.

We are next informed, that Noah opened the window of the ark, and sent forth a raven (chap. viii. 7). He sent forth two birds, a raven and a dove, but the dove is despatched to see if the earth is restored sufficiently to give her a home, and was taken in again when she found no rest, but the raven was simply dismissed. It is interesting to remember this dismissal of the raven. He is a croaking, voracious black bird, and corresponds to those distrustful, melancholy forebodings of evil, which sometimes lead down to despair. Birds correspond to thoughts, because thoughts, like birds, can soar upwards, and look widely round and forward. Thoughts, elevated by living faith, help us

* *Edinburgh Journal*, vol. vii., p. 82.

to realize the language of the prophet. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary: and they shall walk, and not faint."—Isa. xl. 31. But we noticed that all sorts of animals were taken into the ark: hence, the croaking raven was there as well as the cooing dove. And is it not so with us? Although we have had fresh mercies unfolded to us every day since our birth, and the Divine Providence has illustriously displayed itself for us, again and again, yet how often do we let the raven croak afresh, and devour the very vitals of our comfort and peace. It is a dismal bird, black in colour, and its voice seems to forebode misfortune, yet too often we allow it to remain and poison all our hours. We believe the raven instead of believing God. Oh, why do we forget that discipline, and purification, need sorrow, but are dealt out by a hand all mercy. Well is it for us when we determine, like Noah, to turn the raven out. Our trust is now turned into sight, and we discard for ever the dark forebodings of doubt which sometimes lead down to despair, and resolve never more to forget the blessed assurance, "The Lord will provide." Some time since, on looking over the Bethlehem Asylum for the Insane, I noticed particularly, amongst the inmates, one poor man who had lost a small business, and sunk into utter hopelessness. There he sat, with his hands on his knees, moaning and shuddering, from morning till night,—all raven: no sound came but the wail of despair. He had, probably, too fondly loved his little shop; made, as many are prone to do, an idol of it. The idol broke in his hands, and there he sat, the wan spectacle of hopeless grief. He was comfortably cared for even then, and surely the same Divine love would have provided for him when his senses were all unimpaired. Food, clothing, house, were provided for him even then, and a bright sun wooed him to turn from his sorrows, but the dull monotonous raven-note of misery was all he uttered. Oh, how sad is this untrusting spirit. Never forget, my beloved hearers, that "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever." Turn out the raven.

We read, next, that Noah sent forth a dove to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground (ver. 8). The dove corresponds to wisdom united to love. It is the bird of union. Its soft coo breathes hope and tenderness. Our Lord said, "Be ye wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the

wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."—Ps. lxxviii. 13. The dove-spirit is the soft and peaceful spirit of heaven. Noah's sending this out to see if the water had abated, represents the effort of the soul to bring its inner thought into life. It finds no place for the sole of its foot. The first time we endeavour to bring out our yearning for heavenly life into actual conduct, we fail. We are weak, and we find too much opposition around, we must nourish it longer. Still we are assured it is right, and we cherish it in our hearts. We put out our hand and pull it into us into the ark. We stay yet other seven days. In other words, we wait until we are advanced to a more perfect and holy state, and then we try again. This time we succeed a little. We find some sympathy. The dove returns with an olive leaf plucked off, in her mouth. We can do somewhat towards bringing out the heavenly glow we feel within. We wait other seven days. That is, we advance to a still holier and more perfect state, and then we succeed at last—the dove goes forth. We can act freely, in the outer man, the dove-like sentiments of the inner man, and the religion of freedom and love takes the place of the spirit of bondage and fear.

Noah, lastly, built an altar, and offered sacrifices of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings upon the altar. The soul, delivered from the peril of spiritual death, feels grateful, and from gratitude worships the Lord. The heart is the altar, the good affections are the clean beasts, the good thoughts are the clean fowls. They are entirely offered up to the Lord, dedicated to His service from the warmest love, which makes them burnt offerings. This is a sweet savour unto the Lord.

Where this is the experience of the mind there will be no more cursing of the ground. The spirit of the Lord will be felt as an aura of peace and blessing. There will be no more need of the ark of Noah, but we shall have within the golden ark of a spirit loving in intention and loving in act, gold within and gold without (Ex. xxv. 11), a heaven in miniature. Then may we bid adieu to all the agitations of the ocean of life, and rest for ever on the mountains of celestial light.

SERMON XL.

THE RAINBOW.

"And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."—Gen. ix. 12—16.

THE rainbow is a beautiful object. As the glorious arch spans the sky, and glows in its magnificent colours, it awakens admiration in every beholder, and in the reverent soul, confidence, trust, and love. It speaks of hope and heaven. It is the bright symbol of a brighter reality; of such a reception and radiance of the Holy Spirit of the Saviour in the soul as to constitute a RAINBOW in the mind; a promise of salvation and happiness. Earth is not the only land of rainbows, there are rainbows in heaven. Ezekiel saw a wonderful appearance in the land of the blessed, which he thus describes: "As the appearance of the BOW THAT IS IN THE CLOUD IN THE DAY OF RAIN, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake."—Ezek. i. 28. John records a similar sight: "And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."—Rev. iv. 2, 3. There was a similar appearance beheld by John round the head of the glorious person whom he saw with a little book open in his hand: "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire."—Chap. x. 1. These rainbows make it evident that they are known in a land where they are more

beautiful and not so fragile and evanescent as those which come to us like flashes of heavenly beauty, and then speedily fade away.

Indeed, it is of spiritual rainbows, and not of those of earth, of which the text speaks, as we shall find on close examination, and thus it has its deepest significance. We say, on close examination, for it will be found that much that is attributed to rainbows in the text, and in the general impressions of Christians, will not abide the strict investigations of science and reason if applied to the rainbows of our atmosphere; only when we look more interiorly do we discover the full importance of the lesson which the Holy Word was intended to disclose.

One of these general impressions is, that the atmospheric rainbow was displayed for the first time after the deluge. Yet, if the laws of light were the same from the beginning of the world as now, and rain followed a certain amount of evaporation from the sea from the earliest time, as we know it to have done, there must have been rainbows. These glorious objects diversified the scenery of the sky doubtless millions of years before man existed. The light would be refracted by the little globules of rain whenever the sun was shining, as we see it in the spray of the fountains of the Crystal Palace, as we see it in the haze over a waterfall, as we see it in every globe of glass when held in the right direction, and in every crystal prism; and wherever light is refracted there will be exhibited to the eye, present to observe, all the brilliant hues of the rainbow. As the refractions of light which produce the rainbow could not be evidences before the literal flood if it occurred, that there never would be a flood to destroy mankind, so it is difficult to conceive how the very same appearances now can have such a lesson to teach. Besides, as each single person may fall a victim to a partial flood, or otherwise to drowning, it is difficult to see the use there would be in working a miracle to assure him that he need not to fear destruction by a flood precisely like that of Noah.

Another of these general impressions is, that the rainbow is given expressly to assure the world that we shall never be destroyed by water any more. But rainbows appear on the wide ocean, where there are often none but fishes to observe; on the wild desert, where the rude Indian can gather from it no such lesson. Indeed, it could only be a token of such a promise to those who were instructed in such a meaning from the literal sense of our Scriptures, and these, as compared to the human race, are few. To get at a rainbow, then, which complies with the strict conditions of the text in the fullest extent, we must

look inward and upward, and here, as elsewhere, we shall find "It is the spirit that giveth life."

We have noticed, that it would be small comfort to any one to know that he would not be destroyed by a general flood, while he remained exposed to the danger of being drowned by a partial one. Now, if we consider the lesson afforded by a spiritual rainbow, we shall find that it assures the observer of it, in his own soul, that he will not fall a victim to any flood at all. But what is a spiritual rainbow? It is the manifestation, on the soul, of the light of the sun of heaven, so as to shew its threefold splendour. Let us consider the constituents of an outward rainbow, and then apply their correspondences to the mind, and we shall clearly see the meaning of an inward one.

There must be the sun, with its light and heat, the atmosphere, and falling rain. In such circumstances, when the spectator has his back to the shining sun, and sees rain in the opposite quarter, there will also be seen the rainbow.

Now, there is a sun of the soul, with its light and heat, as well as there is a sun of nature. There is rain for the soul as well as for the earth. And, certainly, the soul has its atmosphere, in which it lives and breathes, and in which its phenomena are presented as vividly and really as those which appear in the air.

We have said, there is a sun for the soul, which has its light and heat. And can we doubt that, when we find the recognition of it pervades our whole thought and language? When we have obtained a clearer insight into some subjects, we say we have got more light upon it: the diffusion of truth is called the spread of light. We speak of being warmed when God's love glows upon our hearts, and to burn with a desire for blessing our fellow men. And can we hesitate to say, that the warmth and light thus admitted, come from a centre, a sun. Analogy, which the poet truly calls, "Man's surest guide below," will settle the question. As natural light comes from a natural sun, so spiritual light must come from a spiritual sun. That spiritual sun can be no other than the glorious Being who is Love itself, and Light itself. Hence, the Scriptures call the Lord a Sun. "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."—Isa. lx. 20. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."—Mal. iv. 2.

The spiritual atmosphere consists of the congregated spheres of all minds, and each individual mind has its individual sphere,

consisting of the surrounding elements of its abiding thoughts and ideas, accumulated during the whole course of life. This composes the inner character. We add to it day by day. It is the book in which we inscribe all we love, think, and do. We read it when we consult our memories, and into it all new impressions are received. Hence, the events and the lessons of life are not received by any means alike by all, but by each according to his previous state, made up of the desirings, thinkings, and doings of all his previous existence.

This sphere around the spirit is often overlooked, but has a most real existence. Hence, there are individuals in whose company, from some unknown cause, others are never happy. There seems a feeling of distrust and discomfort ever with them. Others there are with whom persons feel at home immediately. This sphere round the soul, like the fragrance round the rose, makes the genuinely good welcome, with the like-minded, always. There is a hidden sympathy, an interior agreement, that binds those who love goodness and truth for their own sakes, as members of the same family. In heaven, this congeniality of sphere will be one of the chief components of the bliss of the angels: there will be that perfect harmony of soul, that delightful accordance of character, that each one will feel as if he had known and loved the others, as brothers and sisters, all his life. This sphere of the soul, then, is its atmosphere. It receives all its influences through that, and sees all the objects spiritually presented to it either through the brightness or the gloom of this sphere in which it habitually lives. Every one knows that things never appear alike to two individuals. They see them through different mediums. To one, all is bright and cheerful: to another, everything is gloomy and sad. This is not always taken sufficiently into account by others, who blame those who do not see subjects in the same light as they themselves do, not reflecting on the fact, that the mediums through which they see are different. Yet all are conscious, when they consider their own states, that they do not themselves behold things in the same light at all times. To-day they are drooping and sad, and are disposed to notice only the black side of every subject; even the Divine Being, in these states, is regarded as inscrutably severe. To-morrow a livelier condition of spirit exists; the soul bounds forward in hope and joy, and sees the bright side of all things, rejoicing in the acknowledgment that God is Love. The atmosphere of the soul has cleared, and all is sunny. In dealing with our fellow-creatures, or considering their views of God, we should never forget the fact of the Spirit's atmosphere. In this

atmosphere there occur all the changes of the weather without. There are heavy clouds and light; dark days and bright ones; healthy cheerful breezes and awful storms; pouring rains and refreshing showers. These form the temper in all its varieties; and while we should ever strive to keep our own spiritual weather serene, we ought also to remember that the ability to do this perfectly belongs only to the perfectly regenerate state. No land on earth is quite exempt from storms; it is only in the calm blue depths of the upper sky that lasting peace prevails.

The third fact to be borne in mind, when the production of a rainbow is the object of contemplation, is, that when this phenomena occurs rain is falling. So is it when a spirit bow is formed. Rain to the spirit is instruction from the Lord. This comes down like a gentle refreshing shower. "My doctrine," said the Israelitish lawgiver, "shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God."—Gen. xxxii. 2, 3. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you."—Hos. x. 12. Now, when such instruction is entering the soul, and there is reverence for the Lord there, the sun is above the horizon of the soul, and in its atmosphere there will be a spiritual beauty and splendour produced which will make a RAINBOW IN THE SOUL. If there be pride, envy, hatred, or lust, as dominant principles in the heart, there will be no rainbow, the clouds will be too dense and dark, and there is great danger of a destructive flood: but if there be innocence, goodness, piety, and mercy there, God will see the rainbow, and it will be a token of a covenant between Him and that soul. No destructive flood can overwhelm where that rainbow is seen.

The colours of the rainbow are extremely beautiful, and very instructive to contemplate. They are seven, as observed by the eye, of which the red is the uppermost, and violet the lowest. The seven colours in the order in which they occur are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Some of these, however, are believed to be compounded of the others, and the three which are absolutely original are red, yellow, and blue.

Colours have their significance in spiritual things. These have their beautiful seemings to the mind, as natural objects have to the eye. Red, the colour of fire, is representative of the glow of love in the soul. Blue, the colour of the deep calm sky, represents the peaceful lessons of inward truth, and yellow is the

symbol of outward goodness. The ardour of the Divine Love is expressed by the prophet, when he said of the representation of the Lord: "I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of His loins even upward, and from the appearance of His loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about."—Ezek. i. 27. The energy of the Divine desire to bless, as pervading all His attributes, and all the heavens, is expressed by the colour of fire, upwards and downwards. Blue, with its deep, serene, thoughtful aspect, is the colour of the ribband which the divine command ordered to be upon every Israelite's dress, and which prevailed in the veil of the temple, because it fitly represented to the mind the purity and beauty of truth. Yellow, the colour of brass, is the symbol of the good which relates to the neighbour, and is comparatively external. The Lord's feet are said, in the book of Revelation, to be "like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."—Chap. i. 15. These three essential colours, then, represent love to the Lord, love to the neighbour, and the spiritual truth which is in harmony with both. When the mind is receiving instruction then; when there is spiritual rain, and because love and charity are within, and accompanied by a reverent regard for the truth, these appear like a heavenly rainbow in the soul; and when these appear it is evident there is a covenant between the Lord and that soul. There is no danger of flood there. It is a token of an everlasting covenant between the Lord, and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. None but those who are living can exhibit this beautiful rainbow. And in proportion to the spiritual life, or in other words, the heavenly love of those who display it, will its colours be brilliant or otherwise. Innocence of heart, which entirely disclaims all idea of merit, or of any claim to anything but the divine mercy of the Lord, gives great vividness to the internal rainbow. It is beautiful to behold, and a token, a sure token of the everlasting covenant between God and man.

The red, we have noticed, is the uppermost colour in the rainbow, as a token of the supremacy of love represented by the red. This is the soul, the essence, and the crown of all virtues. "Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." The violet is the lowest colour of the bow, and it is the red and blue united. In good works and words, which form the lowest or most external quality of the Christian character, love and truth are both combined, and produce that soft and beautiful quality which is a violet to the mind.

This bow is a token of the covenant between God and the soul. It is not the covenant itself, but a token of the covenant. The covenant itself is the conjunction of the soul and the Lord by interior love. Nothing but love conjoins.

It is interesting to notice how expressive the word covenant is of the thing it signifies. It is made of two words, which signify coming together. From *venant*, coming, and *con* with *n* omitted. Now, in a covenant, God and man come together. The idea of a covenant involves two, and a free approach on each side. Thus, it involves God's operation and invitation, and man's co-operation and reception.

The Lord loves us, and draws nigh to us; if we respond in love a covenant is effected. "He abides in us, and we in Him." "Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."—John xiv. 23. But will God, in very deed, dwell with us? Can we conceive that the King of kings, the Eternal Love which sustains all worlds, will deign to make a covenant with, and abide with us? Oh, yes, it is indeed true. It is for that end He made us, and all the operations of His Providence exist. He has formed man to be the image of all His Divine Perfections, that He may receive them all, and be blessed. Man is an assemblage, an embodiment of wants, internal and external, that Divine Benevolence may fill him with blessing by their supply. He has affections for good of every kind, that good may be given him. He has desires for truth of every kind, that truths may be given him. He has sensational desires and corporeal desires, that nature in all her kingdoms may enrich him through all his senses. How grand is the covenant, then, that Infinite Love desires to make with man; to fill him interiorly with its blessings, and exteriorly with its abundance; to make a covenant with him in every department of his being. He invites him to this covenant: He woos him to it. Its attractions are the bands of love, the cords of true manhood. Nothing opposes or prevents it but man's miserable self-hood. That dark and horrid compound it is which is preferred by every sinner to his adorable, All-good, and All-beautiful Creator and Saviour. But, surely, it shall not be so with us. We will do our part of the gracious covenant of mercy, love, and light, to which we are invited. We will adopt the terms, and say from our inmost hearts, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name." Well, then, let the rainbow be seen, let the red, the blue, and the yellow appear, the beautiful arch which is the

token of the covenant which you desire, and your heavenly Father is making with you.

The Lord sets His bow in the cloud. The time of cloud is the time of serious thought. In the giddy outflow of the natural spirits all seems sunshine and joy. The heedless mind sees no unpleasant consequences, and gaiety enlivens every scene. But that will not last for ever. Seasons of reflection will come. The aching sensation that all is not right with the highest interests of the soul will force itself upon us, and happy it is when this takes place early. In the quiet of our chamber, in the loneliness of a walk of meditation, by the sick bed of a beloved friend or relative, by the bedside of death, it may be the cloud of earnest thought comes over the soul, and everything is hidden from the spirit's observation for the time but the divine whisper, What doest thou here? A glance over our past and present life reveals its empty, aimless, and hollow, it may be its vile, character. A crowd of considerations come over us: the teachings of infancy, the stored up lessons of the Word, the sweet influences of angels press upon us, inviting us to a better life: then come doubts of our acceptance, depressions, self-accusations, condemnations, fears, sorrows, the cloud deepens, but at last hope helps us to look up, heaven is opened to us, and we see the glorious rainbow which the Divine Spirit makes upon the soul. It seems to say, All who revere love, truth, and virtue, I will receive and bless. The soul responds, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief. We are enabled to lay hold of the glorious promise, and to rejoice that there is a covenant between us and our God. We realize the sacred words: "I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."—Ezek. xxxiv. 25, 26.

We must notice, that first this covenant is between the Lord and the earth, ver. 13; and next, "between every living creature of all flesh."—Ver. 15. The earth represents the natural man, and the covenant the Lord makes with the earth is dependent for being unbroken upon the natural man being made obedient to the divine commandments. Its evils must be resisted by power from the Lord. "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, He is God, the *faithful* God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations."—Deut. vii. 9. The effort to keep the

commandments in the Saviour's strength will be sure to succeed. No evil is too strong for Him. No flood can do harm when this spirit is there. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and DOETH them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the *floods* came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."—Matt. vii. 24, 25. The earth, or external mind, is in all of us the seat of innumerable evils. By obedience only can these evils be subdued and extirpated. The Lord, however, will do this, if we keep His sayings. "He is a faithful God, keeping the covenant of mercy and truth with them that love Him and keep His commandments." Too many overlook this covenant with the earth. They suppose the Lord has only a covenant with the heavens, the interiors of the mind. But, no, it is quite otherwise. The earth is wrong, and therefore heaven is shut up. Earth is the battle-field. There the victory or the defeat of every soul is accomplished. And one of the subtlest of errors is that which would persuade us that there is no need to trouble about the earth; God is not concerned about it. It is there where Satan's seat is. Thence must he be cast out, if the kingdom of God must come, and His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Behold then the hallowed arch as a divine promise that all help will be given by the Divine Saviour until your whole life will be spanned by an EVERLASTING RAINBOW.

The covenant is next said to be with every living thing of all flesh. Every living thing is every regenerated affection. From the lowest appetite, signified by the creeping things of the earth, through the thoughts—the birds, to the nobler affections, signified by the useful animals—the oxen, sheep, and lambs, all should be filled with heavenly love. "Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do it all for the glory of God." And, then, there is a covenant with every living thing of all flesh: an eternal excellency runs through them, a joy of many generations.

"The rainbow bending in the sky
Bedecked with sundry hues,
Is like the seat of God on high,
And seems to tell these news."

When we look around at the world, and remember that we are in the nineteenth century of the Christian era, the reflection is but a gloomy one. We see war making its awful ravages, yet, as if the Great Saviour had not said, "Love one another." The slave-trade even pursued by men called Christians, and murdering its thousands to bind its hundreds to hopeless ill-

requited toil. The great Christian communities armed to the teeth, lest each should plunge upon the other like banditti, and gorge their lust of power with pillage and massacre. The internal condition of the Christian kingdoms is equally unsatisfactory, crime rather upon the increase than otherwise. Ignorance not vigorously combated, but those who should be drying up all its marshes, and rooting out all its weeds, quarrelling about the mode of its being done, and content rather to leave the mind a waste than run the risk of not having it all done by their sect. In the great trading operations of the world how alarming are the instances of fraud! Here and there sad discoveries appal mankind, and these are but symptoms which reveal the workings of the diseases of avarice, profligacy, and injustice underneath. Superstition still blinds its millions. Talented thousands are still content to fatten by dealing out ancient folly, as if they believed it. The faithful few, who yearn for better things, cry out, Lord, how long! The dreary prospect saddens them. The cloud comes over them, and they would be ready to fold their arms in finished despair, but they look up and see the RAINBOW. A new dispensation of religion has been revealed, which unfolds not faith alone for men to fight about, but love, truth, and virtue; like the three colours of the rainbow, to disclose new beauty and blessing for the world, and red, the colour of love, the brightest.

The ark, again, is given for human safety; but not the ark only, the rainbow appears. Principles are given and are being received here and there by minds which will introduce order for confusion, light for darkness, justice for selfishness, beauty for ashes, joy for sorrow, heaven for hell. These principles form the triple loveliness of a divine arch, that will in time span over all the nations of the earth, and encircle them in a glorious bond of brotherhood. These principles are the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. What relation, my beloved hearer, do you bear to them? In the rainbow every drop bears its part, and is a little crystal sphere, which is a rainbow in itself, while it contributes its share to the effect of the grand arch. You are a drop,—do your part. Let love, let truth, let virtue govern you. Carry out your salvation from evil and falsehood as if the redemption of the world depended upon it. Shine by the beauty of divine principles in the circle you fill, and you will leave the world better than you found it. And you will some day look down from a higher sphere, and join your hymn with myriads more over a fully redeemed earth, while they cry with great voices filled with love, "The kingdoms of

this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."

"Rise crowned with light, imperial Salem rise!
Exalt thy towery head, and lift thine eyes;
See, a long race thy spacious courts adorn,
See future sons and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies."

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