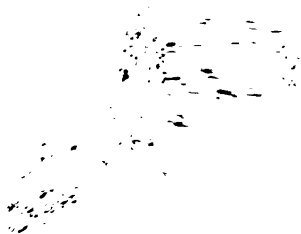




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FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.



FROM
EGYPT TO CANAAN:

BEING THE
DIVINE DESCRIPTION OF THE REGENERATE LIFE
SHEWN BY
ISRAEL IN EGYPT,
THE
JOURNEY IN THE WILDERNESS,
AND THE
CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. DR. BAYLEY,

MINISTER OF ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON.



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P R E F A C E.

THE Discourses on the Divine History of the Journey of the Israelites "FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN," were begun, and the greater part of them delivered, during the excitement occasioned by the publications of Bishop Colenso, which called in question the Inspiration and Accuracy of the Pentateuch, and the book of Joshua. Their aim was to shew, first, that the Word of God in this portion of its pages had the grandest possible object in view;—the description of the Regeneration of Man, and that this description when spiritually understood, is true for this age and for all ages, "the Word of our God endureth for ever." We venture to hope, that while we have maintained the literal accuracy of the portion of the Sacred Volume upon which we have dwelt, we have, at the same time, drawn such lessons of Eternal Wisdom from the various subjects presented by our texts as to educe those thoughts which are as much higher than our thoughts, as "the heaven is higher than the earth," (Isa. lv. 9), and at the same time to shew how the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.—Ps. xix. 7. The Discourses are now committed to the meditation of their readers, with the Author's earnest prayer that they may contribute to make the Divine Word, "a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path."—Ps. cxix. 105.

One thing is needful for us all,—that we be fitted for heaven. The mode is declared, and unfolded in the Divine Volume. May we so profit by it that we shall eschew the bondage of sin, and led by the truth flowing from the centre of all loving freedom, the Lord Jesus Christ, enter into the glorious liberty of the children of light, thus passing "FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN."

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FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

SERMON I.

ISRAEL SUFFERING.

“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph.”—Exodus i. 8.

The divine history of Israel's freedom from Egyptian oppression, of their journeyings through the wilderness for forty years, and their settlement in Canaan, is the inspired record of regeneration. Hence, the pages of the Word of God have an interest far above that of any human composition. They form the Book of books. In their delineations, every soul may see its state pictured, its struggles described; their spirit speaks not of earthly interests, of temporal defeat or triumph, not even of the rise and decay of nations; but of the soul and its eternal concerns, of the movements of our own spiritual life, of those changes of state within, whose issues are to the good, unending peace; and to the evil, the wreck of every God-given faculty, perpetual blindness to truth, perpetual hatred to good, perpetual wrong, and therefore, perpetual misery. “Ye must be born again” is the grand lesson of the Divine Volume in all its parts. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”—Ps. xix. 7. “I will open my mouth in a PARABLE, I will utter dark sayings of old,” (Ps. lxxviii. 2,) said the Psalmist, when he was inspired to declare the wonders of the God of heaven shewn to the fathers of Israel at the Nile and in the desert; and to say, “Marvelous things did he in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through, and he made the waters to stand as a heap. In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.”—12—16. Viewed thus, as bearing in its bosom spiritual,

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universal, and eternal lessons, the wondrous Book of God unfolds the evidences of its own divinity, of its inspiration from wisdom more than human. Who but God could reveal the soul's inner workings to itself, its sufferings in the bondage of sin, and its yearnings for freedom; could describe step by step the obstacles, the temptations, the trials, the triumphs, through which it attains inner freedom and blessedness, confirmed by an experience which has been found true to the consciousness of the pilgrims for heaven in every age? Never book spake like this book. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God endureth for ever."—Isa. XL. 8.

We must not be understood to mean that the Israelitish history is only spiritual or allegorical: its letter is divinely true as a basis for its spirit, and in this respect it is most interesting and most wonderful. There are portions of the Bible,—the first eleven chapters of Genesis, which are wholly and only allegorical, because they relate to ages far before the time of earthly history, when spiritual things were all in all with men; and it would be as little wise, to interpret the tree of life, and the fountain of paradise going out into four rivers, the talking serpent, and the flood, of the beginning of the Divine Volume, by earthly objects, as it would be so to interpret the tree of life, (Rev. xxii. 2.) and the river of the water of life, (ver. 1.) the serpent, (Rev. xii. 3.) and the flood, (Rev. xii.) of the last book of the Bible,—the Apocalypse, and regard them as earthly objects. But after the decline of the early spiritually-minded ages it is otherwise. The histories are naturally true, but are so arranged by infinite wisdom, as to be the exact counterparts of spiritual and eternal truths, which are realized in the Lord's Church and in the soul of man. Like the veil on the face of Moses, they are real but translucent. The literal histories are clouds, but to the opened eyes of the thoughtful, bright clouds through which beams the perpetual glory of heaven.

The events we are now considering, are eminently interesting in their outward aspect. We have the most remarkable of ancient nations in its proudest state; and Israel, soon to issue upon their wondrous career of keepers of the oracles of God. We have Egypt, whose cultivation was complete and hoary with age, even at the time of the Exodus, nearly fifteen centuries before the coming of our Lord, and which contains massive monuments, probably of two thousand years before that period: Egypt, whose people were declared by Herodotus to be the most learned of mankind, and whose priests read to him their list of three hundred and fifty kings, embraced in thirty dynasties. We

have Egypt, that land of the mighty pyramids, the largest being the oldest, and compared with which, all modern buildings are but modest in dimension; the land of immense temples, which are even yet unapproached in size; for St. Peter's, great as it is, cannot vie with the marvellous temple of Karnac, with its hall of more than a hundred gigantic columns: the land of great obelisks, statues, and sphynxes: the land of Thebes with its hundred gates, of Luxor, of Memphis, of Meroe, of Philæ, and of other wondrous sites: the land of the tombs, where life has so astonishingly been depicted and preserved in death.

As might be expected, there are numerous illustrations and confirmations of the sacred history, in the records of Egyptian life of the period of the Exodus. These confirmations are summed up by eminent men thus. "The conquest of the shepherd kings by Pharaoh Amosis, the head of the eighteenth dynasty, synchronizes perfectly, according to Egyptian chronology, with the rise of that king who knew not Joseph; as this Pharaoh had a son named Rameses, it is more than probable that one of the treasure cities, which he compelled the Israelites to build, (Exodus i. 11.) was called after his son's name: a tomb at Thebes of this time, has a pictorial representation of the Jews engaged in making bricks, with Egyptian taskmasters standing over them: no tomb has been discovered of Pharaoh,* Thothmes IV., whose reign was certainly a brief one, and who, it has been supposed was the Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea; this sovereign was not succeeded by his eldest son, which agrees with the Scripture narrative respecting the destruction of the first-born in the land of Egypt."

We have brought Egypt thus vividly before us, that we may see clearly the reason for its spiritual signification. Itself the land of science and of symbol, it became one grand symbol for all time. It was the collection in ancient days of all that was great in worldly science, worldly grandeur, worldly learning, worldly fashion, and worldly religion. It was THE WORLD of those times, as contradistinguished from inner spiritual thoughts and feelings, and it became for ever the symbol in the Word of God, of the world,—the outer region of mind with its intellectual attainments and sensuous life. The very position and circumstances of the country strikingly exemplify its spiritual use. The land was formed from the Nile, and by the Nile its wealth and fertility are constantly sustained. It is covered with vegetable abundance, but chiefly of grain. Few of the nobler trees are there, but lower products in plenty. It is not watered by rain

* Pharaoh was not a proper individual name, but a title of dignity like Czar, Emperor or Sultan. Its meaning is "son of the sun." A2

direct from heaven ; its supply is indirect, gathered from lakes which lie far away in sunny lands beneath the equator, and from mountains which lift their heads high up to catch the dews and vapours of the upper sky. So is it with the worldly man ; all his gifts, his science, his learning, his wealth, his talents, and his graces, his power and magnificence, come down to him from heaven, but not directly. They come it may be from remote ages, and through wiser and better men, but every gift comes down from the Father of lights. The worldling like the Egyptian enjoys his Nile, and does not perceive its source.

Egypt is presented to us in Scripture in three aspects. First, as rendering friendly service to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and, especially as being saved and ruled over by Joseph. Secondly, as opposed to Israel and unfriendly ; and our text and the whole history of the Exodus exhibits this second and grievous manifestation. And thirdly, as restored and in perfect harmony with Israel. This latter condition is described by the prophet Isaiah, "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord." XIX. 19. Our text alludes to the two former conditions. "Now there arose up a king over Egypt, that knew not Joseph."

Egypt in friendship with the patriarchs and ruled over by Joseph, is the beautiful representation of the world as it is in religious childhood and youth. The world is beautiful to a child, all things smile upon it. It rejoices, and with an innocent joy, in the sunshine, the glory, and the loveliness of earth. Its new young spirit hails each fresh acquirement, and with a bee-like industry strives to gather honey from every mental flower.

The world is all fresh to the child, and it walks almost unharmed, unthinking of danger. Principles of religion from the Lord visit the young soul like the patriarchs, and wondrous things are done within, unknown to the world around, but fortifying the youthful mind, and preparing it for the regeneration of after days. Egypt under Joseph, represents the soul of the young disciple under the holy principle of piety. When religion in early life has had its trials, and been faithful and pure, divine wisdom is revealed to it as it was to Joseph, and the soul is forewarned and forearmed against coming times of temptation in daily life, and its wants in spiritual famine are all supplied. All the chief virtues of religion, like the twelve sons of Jacob, descend into the region of his daily thought, sentiments, and works, and are there sustained. Such a young soul is in the world, but not of the world. Every earthly purpose is subservient to the spirit of religion, as Egypt was to Joseph, and all goes

well. The ruling aim of the soul, be it the desire for learning, for fame, or for wealth, is regarded as the servant of a higher aim, the love of the Lord, and His kingdom. This king knows Joseph, and gives him full power to rule in the land.

The young soul then, is like Egypt under this goodly rule. Pharaoh says unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled."—Gen. xli. 39, 40.

"O seek the Lord betimes, and choose
The path of heavenly truth ;
The earth affords no lovelier sight,
Than piety in youth."

This lovely sight continues sometimes longer and sometimes shorter, sometimes is more rudely interrupted, sometimes less, but sooner or later, and more or less, probably with all persons, the latent evils of our fallen nature shew themselves, and a king rises up that knows not Joseph, or in other words, a principle of evil unfolds itself in the soul, that is rebellious against God, and has no regard for piety, or religion. A lawless spirit reigns, self-will takes the place of gentleness and obedience : the holy sentiments of childhood and youth are uncultivated, uncared for, and forgotten. The soul then, is like Egypt under a wicked king. The condition of things is that graphically described in the chapter before us. There are the lawless Egyptians and their ruthless king : there are also the Israelites, but down-trodden and suffering.

The soul is more highly organized than the body. It is a world in miniature, a little universe. Innumerable ideas, sentiments, thoughts, and feelings, appear and disappear with the constantly moving activities of the mind. There are mental kingdoms, provinces, departments ; in fact, all things in heaven and earth are used in the Divine Word to depict the principles and states of the soul. Instead of having no form, it comprehends all forms, and in its entirety is human,—it is a spiritual body. And all this is felt to be true to our perceptions. Hence, in our ordinary speech all things in nature are employed to describe changes of state in the soul.

The two kingdoms of heaven and hell are both represented in the heart and mind. There is some leading evil, like a horrid despot, reigning in the lower degree of the soul—the natural man, with subservient passions, principles, sentiments, and ideas. Self, in one form or another is the central object in the heart that is deceitful above all things. (Jer. xvii. 9.) Below, are pride,

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self-conceit, vanity, ostentation, with a variety of evil counsellors perverting the imagination to think that wrong is right, that good is evil, and truth is false. Below these, are the lusts which pander to the peculiar outward sins to which the soul is prone, whether the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life. (1 John, II. 15.) Besides these, there are the acquisitive powers of the soul employed to provide the means for carrying out its projects of indulgence or aggrandizement, there are the principles which cover all over with fair seemings of decency, modesty, and order, except in cases of degradation so deep as to be reckless of all good report, and lost to all appearance of virtue. Usually there is a decorous outside, a form of reason and religion, a righteous appearance of morality, which makes a certain air of beauty around, though within there are rottenness and dead men's bones. (Matt. xxiii. 27.) Often indeed! with this prevalence of sin and selfishness within, there is much talk of devotedness to eternal things, and of reverence for the Scriptures, and for God; the form of piety, and the doctrines of faith are loudly maintained, but form only, and faith alone. Every portion of Scripture which can be pressed into meaning that we are sure of salvation done out of us for us, is diligently pressed into the service of inward sin, and the evil soul will believe anything, however crude, contradictory, or absurd: will believe that it was chosen from eternity out of thousands of others, equally deserving or undeserving, by the God of infinite love, to be saved whether it would or not: that its sins were taken away on our Lord's cross nearly two thousand years before it was born, and had any sin: it will believe its sins are forgiven because a man says they are forgiven, though it feels their desires and delights as strongly as ever; in short, it will believe anything, only let it practically be spared from slaying self within, and its darling propensities, or yielding more obedience to the commandments of the God of love than such as the world demands.

This is the condition of the soul, which Pharaoh and his kingdom represent in the first chapter of Exodus. A king has arisen which knew not Joseph. Piety in youth has given way to selfishness, pretence, and sin. Our Lord describes this state in that remarkable passage in the Gospel, "When a strong man keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour in which he trusted."—Luke xi. 21, 22.

We have described the evil condition of the soul, but there is the other side. Divine mercy provides an Israel in Egypt. There is the ground-work of good implanted by the Lord in the

very embryo of our being, and which enabled Him to say of children, "Of such is the kingdom of God."

The hour is approaching when this slavery is to end, and the trumpet of deliverance shall sound; but in the meantime, the principles and powers of good are made to serve. They build treasure cities for Pharaoh, Pithom, and Raameses, the latter city being called, there is reason to believe, after the king's eldest son, which the name favours,* and the former, Pithom, signifying an abundance for the mouth. Both being expressive of those gatherings of divine knowledge which are common with the evil, when they fear, and doubt, and dread, yet will not alter. They gather spiritual knowledge, to support their eldest son, the conceit of a worthless faith, they gather abundance for profession, the mouth is fully supplied, but for self-sacrifices, for real love to God and their neighbour, they are miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

The labour which they compel the Israelites to perform in clay (called wrongly, mortar in the text) and brick, represents the bending and prostitution of things good and true in the soul, to be subservient to what is evil and false. The filthiness of evil is expressed by clay, when used in reference to the wicked, and the artificial character of falsehood is expressed by brick as contrasted with stone. Of the Babel-builders it is written, "brick had they for stone, and slime had they for mortar."—Gen. xi. 3. In the Psalms, a foul and filthy state of the heart is signified by clay. "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, and out of the miry CLAY, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."—Ps. xl. 1, 2. "Save me O God for the waters are come in upon my soul. I sink in deep MIRE, where there is no standing."

Rocks, from their solid nature, and their use for foundations, and for walls, are the symbols of foundation-truths, hence, the Lord is called the Rock of Israel, and the Head-Stone of the corner, bricks therefore as artificial substitutes for rock and stone, represent the substitutes for truths, which are fallacies.

The scene of the Israelites labouring in the field with clay and brick, strikingly symbolizes the condition of the soul while knowing and yearning for what is good, being compelled to submit to what is evil and make excuses for it. The mind in such cases feels itself defiled, loathes its occupation, but is compelled to slave on, and to find bad arguments which in its heart of hearts it condemns and abhors.

* Raameses in Egyptian, or Rameses, the offspring of the sun.

Pharoah becomes more and more alarmed, and more and more cruel and desperate. Hence, at last the decree, that the mid-wives should destroy the male children.

In spiritual things, the union of love and faith in the inmost soul is likened to a marriage, and the affections and thoughts thence born in the mind are regarded as daughters and sons. The affections for truth are daughters; hence, the muses with the ancients are represented as nine maidens, and in the Scriptures we read of the daughter of Zion, the daughter of Jerusalem, the king's daughter all glorious within; but the more sturdy sons represent thoughts of truth, firm and strong.

The gentle affections can be made subservient to evil states, they can make sin graceful and lend it support. Indeed the strength and life of every evil system in the world, arise chiefly from the hoodwinked good people who are associated with it. Pharoah is quite content with them, let the daughters live he says. They recommend a system which is fraught with evil and a curse to the world, they prop it up, they continue it, they make it respectable. But the sons of Israel, the true thoughts which spring up in the mind are more penetrating and discriminating, they try evil systems and condemn them. Hence, evil dreads the sons, and commands that they should be destroyed. It has been ever so, the thinkers terrify the despots. The king's effort to destroy the male children by means of the mid-wives, is an instructive representation of an important fact. All true natural science is a mid-wife to spiritual realities, it illustrates them, confirms them, ushers them as it were into the world. It is friendly to spiritual truth, it points through nature up to nature's God. All truth is in harmony, and each part conspires to strengthen the other. Yet sin always wishes to set science against religion, the mid-wife to kill the child. But if the mid-wife be true, she ever fears God and preserves the child. God confirms the mid-wives, and makes them houses.

When astronomy was new, it was supposed by the opposers of divine things, to serve their purposes; and so with geology, but now, both are seen to point to eternal love, millions of ages past storing the appliances of metals, minerals, soils, gases, in all their multiform and wondrous varieties, while the inner and higher sense of Scripture unfolds to us truths of regeneration, which more than keep the children alive. So the mid-wives ever reply, "the Hebrew women are lively, the children are born and live." And they will live. The Lord Jesus by His law will break the bondage of Pharoah. Heaven's freedom must be given.

SERMON II.

THE FINDING OF MOSES.

“And the daughter of Pharoah came down to wash herself at the river: and her maidens walked along the river side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”—Exodus II. 5, 6.

It is an adage trite and true, that great events arise from little things. No doubt, there is another side to this truth. There must be causes adequate to produce all effects. And behind and underneath causes apparently weak and small, there must be immense powers, when the causes increase and become mighty, and change the face of the world; yet how simple and powerless they seem at first. How forcibly is this truth illustrated* by the circumstance presented in our text. Here was a little child born in terror, of despised parents, hidden for safety in a frail chest of bulrushes, crudely preserved from the water and the observation of the dangerous crocodile, feeble as feebleness itself, to all appearance; yet that child was to be the deliverer of his people, the legislator of his nation, and not of that nation only, but through the Divine Word, of which he and his nation were the receivers and depositories of the ever increasing christian nations, and for all time. Even in heaven, they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

How clearly and how wonderfully does this teach us not to despise the day of small things, not to imagine that the race is ever to the strong, but to rest in perfect faith on the truth, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. If any one had been asked at the time of the event recorded in our text, which will be the most influential in the world, the proud and powerful Pharoah who rules the world’s mightiest and most ancient throne, or, that weak and weeping babe, especially if the courtiers had thus been questioned

there would have been no doubt the king would have had every suffrage, but it was not so ; the name of the once proud despot is scarcely known, while the name and influence of that infant will never die. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." 1 Cor. i. 27—29.

The greatest of all examples of this kind, is that of the Lord himself ; lonely, forsaken of every disciple, left to die upon the cross. He was rejected, despised, crucified. Against Him, were his own nation, his own kindred. Against Him were the Jewish dignitaries, entrenched in their rank and influence by centuries of usage and prejudice, behind them, the Roman Power, the greatest the world had ever known. There were church and state in both these powers, rooted, ramified, triumphant. To all appearance, the dying Saviour would have no influence in forming the new age, like that which these old and powerful organizations would exert. But how different is the event, embodied and entrenched error, though surrounded by the respectability of antiquity, rank, fashion, prejudice, magnificence, power, has nevertheless faded, crumbled, and gone ; while TRUTH, small, weak, rejected, trampled upon, supposed to be extinguished, nevertheless rose again, and with healing in its wings, spread its holy splendours ever wider, ever grander, and will spread them until they embosom the whole earth. The moral of all this is. Let us be ever on the side of truth, however feeble or few they may be who hold it now. The day is sure to come, when the truth despised to day, will be welcomed by millions. "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Permit me now to direct your attention to the spiritual lesson enclosed in the divine narrative before us. It is the birth of the law in the soul ; that inner sense of right which becomes law to the conscience. The name Moses signifies DRAWN OUT, and in giving it, Pharaoh's daughter said, "Because I drew him out of the water."—Ex. ii. 10. The spiritual Moses now, is the law of the divine commandments, as seen in their essence and explained by the Lord. "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 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. 38—40.

The narratives, the histories, the prophecies and psalms of the Divine Word, seem to treat of an immense number of subjects besides the two spoken of by the Lord, yet when their aim, their purpose is drawn out, the inculcation of love to God and love to man is really in them all. This essential law then, is Moses. He is said to be born from a man of the house of Levi and a daughter of Levi, (ver. 1.); because the conjunction of goodness and truth in the soul is likened in the Word to a marriage, and is a spiritual marriage. When faith in the intellect is joined to affection in the heart, and is no longer faith alone, then holy feelings and thoughts are born in the mental household within, and the prime birth of all, is this conscientious sense of divine right, this reverence for the divine will. Moses, stands throughout the Sacred Volume for the Law, sometimes in a wider, sometimes in a narrower sense. "They have Moses and the prophets," said our Lord, "let them hear them."—Luke xvi. 29. "And, beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself."—Luke xxiv. 27. "But even to this day," said the apostle Paul, "when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts." 2 Cor. iii. 15. The law then signified by Moses, must be born in the soul, or no deliverance is possible. "The law is our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ."—Gal. iii. 24. "I have hid thy word, within my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Ps. cxix. 2. "The law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide."—Ps. xxxvii. 31. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Ps. xix. 7.

When this devout sense of right, this heart-felt reverence for the will of the Divine Being is born within, then does hope indeed enter the soul with all its blessed promises. This sight within of new virtue, this beginning of a holier state, is the commencement of the new man, the realization of the divine admonition, "Ye must be born again." It is the dawn of an inner brightness, of inner purity and life, of an inner heaven. What new glories break upon the soul when this young angel is felt there. He is a goodly child, as is said of Moses. Yet in this blending of fear and hope, the soul, conscious of how much has to be done, and hardly daring to trust that redemption can be effected, hides the young child, for three months.

Times governed by the sun, correspond to states of love. When love reigns, it is summer in the soul; when love is cold, it is winter. Hence, it is said of the holy waters which are to flow from Jerusalem, in summer and in winter shall it be. (Zech. xiv. 8.) But times governed by the moon, represent

states of faith, for faith reflects the light of love in spiritual darkness, as the moon reflects the light of the sun.

The number three is used in the Word to represent a full state in relation to truth, as we see illustrated where the Lord says, "the kingdom of heaven is like a woman, who hid leaven in three measures of meal." Moses is represented as hidden for three months, and then he could no longer be concealed, to express what always happens in the early stages of the soul's conversion.

The new states are kept secret for awhile, until faith has become more full and perfect, when what the heart feels must be uttered, it can no longer be kept back. "Out of the abundance of the heart; the mouth speaketh." The new state is seen and felt in new words and new works, yet not nakedly to the world, but in an ark of bulrushes.

The ark, is an ancient symbol, and in fact, appears from time to time before us in the Word. There was the ark of wood, and you will remember that it also was covered with pitch. Then there was the ark made in the wilderness, of sacred cedar wood and gold. And lastly, there was the ark seen by John in heaven. (Rev. II. 19.) In all these cases, the ark represents religion as a PROTECTION. The ark of Noah signified religion, as a defence against the deluges of iniquity which then overflowed the world.

Then, as in this ark of Moses, it is said to be covered with pitch, because it symbolizes religion as it is first received, when it is the religion of fear. Man is first afraid of the God whom afterwards he adoringly loves. This dread however serves a salutary purpose; while his state is so low that he is incapable of higher feelings, the coarser ones guard him well; the pitch keeps out the flood. In good time he will have an ark of gold,—a religion of love; the law will be written on his heart. "In fear there is torment, but perfect love casteth out fear."—1 John iv. 18.

The laying of the ark among the flags on the river's brink, is expressive of the soul's feeling that religion is an actual fact, a fact for science equally with other facts, a definite thing for the memory; while the trifling character of worldly knowledge in contrast with religion, is expressed by there being flags by the river's brink. The temporary events of the day, the things of mere outward science, important as they seem to the actors in them glowing with worldly love, are mere flags, rushes,—things of no value, trifles light as air, when compared to the sublime concerns of eternity. The state portrayed, is that delineated by the poet.—

“In heaven above, or hell beneath,
 When I have passed the vale of death,
 Must be my final state ;
 To-day attend the call divine,
 To-morrow never may be thine ;
 Repent ere 'tis too-late.

“Awake from languid nature's dream
 Vast is the change whate'er it seem
 To vain and worldly men :
 Lord, at thy footstool I would bow
 Bid conscience plainly tell me now
 What it would tell then.”

“The daughter of Pharoah came down to wash herself at the river ; and her maidens walked along by the river side.”

It is an interesting fact in the history of Egypt, as now disclosed by the monuments, that though very unusual in the lines of Egyptian monarchs to have a queen regnant, yet there was one about this time, who reigned in her own right, and erected in her life time an obelisk at Thebes, one of the most splendid monuments in that wonderful necropolis, whereon she describes herself as “royal wife,” “lady of both countries,” (the two Egypts, upper and lower,) “great royal sister,” and by the significant title of “Pharoah's daughter.” *

The daughter of Pharoah will figure to us, a pure and chief affection for the things of science. Her maidens will represent the subordinate affections. A similar image is presented here to that in the 45th Psalm. “The king's daughter is all glorious within, her raiment is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework : the virgins her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing they shall enter into the king's palace.” 13—15.

The daughter of Pharoah coming to wash herself at the river, represents the earnest affection in such a soul to be right. In all things of science and outer knowledge, represented by the Nile, the river of Egypt, the true soul desires to be genuine, faithful, correct ; and hence, is constantly studying the truths of science, and yearning for the guidance of divine wisdom, and by their means to free itself from prejudice and misconception. Such a soul is ever desirous of washing itself. To such a state of feeling the ark is revealed, and she sends her maid to fetch it, or in other words, seizes it with affectionate interest. She opens it also. “And when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the babe wept.”—ver. 6.

This opening of the ark, represents the exploration of religion by the earnest mind. To be content to take divine things as

* See Journal of Sacred Literature, October, 1864

others have handed them down, is a mark of a sluggish and heedless soul, content to be saved it may be, if it can be done without any trouble, but with no reverence, no love for the truth. "Every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."—Matt. vii. 8. The careless, the sluggish, the seekers after worldly wealth or distinction, who are so occupied as to have no time for eternal riches, never enter into divine things, and never become rich toward God. Such were not meant by this daughter of Pharaoh. She opened the ark, and saw the child, and behold, the babe wept.

This weeping of the babe, is expressive of the grief of the inner soul at the disorders, the infirmities, and vexations of the outer man. The law within is holy, just, and good, and the soul delights in the law of God after the inward man. (Rom. vii. 22.) But, all around, in the flesh of the soul, the outer man, corruption reigns. "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. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."—Rom. vii. 23, 24. The babe weeps. But "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

When there is a pain felt at sin, there is life. When disorder is mourned over, there is a source of cure and hope. It is well for the babe to weep. If he weep, he is alive, and may become a lusty man. The inward man may become stronger day by day, and at length effect like Moses did, the complete discomfiture of Egypt, and the complete deliverance of Israel.

"She had compassion on him and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children."

Being one of the Hebrews' children, means, that this new state belongs to the church. It is the new birth from above. It is not a new phase of science, or a mere change of temporal experience. It is not mere melancholy flowing from ill health, not an hypochondriacal affection. It flows from heaven. "The Lord hath visited his servant." "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." "It is one of the Hebrews' children."

Divine mercy provides still further help. A sister of the babe comes into sight. An affection for retaining and preserving this new state is at hand, and suggests that the child will need a nurse; and a nurse is at hand, the child's mother. The spirit of piety, the affection for heavenly goodness, existing but scarcely manifest yet, is meant by the child's mother. This spirit in the church is the nursing mother of Moses. The babes in Christ must be fed with the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow

thereby. (1 Peter, II. 2.) This nursing and feeding of the weak, is one of the church's highest duties, its gravest responsibilities, and greatest source of blessing and of joy. The soul, young in the regenerate life, if well nursed, will grow up healthy, strong, and beautiful; valuable for life, and valuable for eternity; if badly nursed, will grow stunted, feeble, and deformed.

This work of nursing, is at present very inadequately done. We are too often taken up with other and less important work, or too engrossed with self, and hence, too often remiss in obtaining those blessings in abundance, which are spoken of by the daughter of Pharaoh when she concludes her charge. "Nurse him for me, and I will give thee wages."

This promise of wages by Pharaoh's daughter, in case the nursing is well done, is an intimation of the great truth, that a soul educated and trained for heaven is also most successful for earth; that is, in securing earth's truest, sweetest, dearest joys. "Godliness is profitable for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come." If we had not to train the spirit for religion, out of regard for divine law, and the angel-life, it would be needful to train it so for the well-being of the world. What beauty has art ever brought forth to equal that which she has produced when religion has inspired her, and breathed into her the breath of life? What buildings have ever equalled those, in which earthly architects have striven to do honour to the Great Builder of the Universe? What music has ever flowed forth in grandeur capable of emulating those strains, which again and again peal forth in the glorious song, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth"? Religion, as the patron and the soul of all that is good and excellent, may well receive the earth's homage, thus expressed in the language of the daughter of Pharaoh, "Nurse him for me, and I will give thee wages."

Moses was well nursed, well nurtured, trained, and taught. He became master of all the learning of the Egyptians, but he never forgot his origin, or disdained his brethren.

Three things are recorded of him in this chapter. They are extremely significant for all who seek to follow him, and with them we must close. He saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren, and his heart rose against the cruel abusers of the helpless, and he slew the Egyptian, and buried him in the sand. He next day saw two Hebrews contending, and reproved him that did the wrong. He lastly fled, finding he was not strong enough yet to accomplish his mission, and went to Midian, to dwell with those who were feeding their flocks in that country, and to abide his time.

These three things have to be done by every spiritual Moses. The Egyptian smiting the Hebrew, is a striking figure of false science seeking to destroy religious feeling. That is false science, which binds itself to time and sense, and seeks to make matter and body everything. Such are Egyptians smiting the Hebrew, and Moses always strikes down these, and buries them in the sand. Or, in other words, rejects them as mere errors, loose and worthless as sand is when compared to rock. His seeing two Hebrews striving on the next day and reproving them, represents a perception in the soul of religious virtues not being in harmony. In their yet immature states, even good persons exalt one heavenly principle unduly, and unduly depress another. Some make too much of works, some too little. Moses reproved him who did the wrong, but as yet is far from strong enough to put all right. He fled therefore to Midian, and abode near a well, with those who were caring for and feeding their flocks, to gather strength and await his time.

Midian, in the wilderness, represents an external state ; feeding the flock, is expressive of cultivating the spirit of charity ; while abiding near a well, means, devoutly studying the letter of the Word of God, drawing water, as the prophet Isaiah expresses it, "from the wells of salvation."—Isai, XII. 4. There are alas, too often to be found, shepherds like those in this history, who will not allow the seven daughters, representing all holy affections for truth, to water the flocks ; who deter the people from a genuine drawing of the water of life, to supply the yearnings after truth, but every true Moses stands up for such, and says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Allow me finally, my beloved brethren, to commend the whole lesson to your meditation and practical use. We are all in Egyptian bondage, until the Lord Jesus by His law, our Moses, leads us forth. Hence, to every one the Lord says at the beginning of the commandments, "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Is Moses yet born within ? Is he grown up ? And is he doing his holy work of smiting the godless Egyptian, setting right the Hebrews, and feeding the flock by the well ? If so, then is it indeed happy with us. Our spiritual freedom is dawning. From being bond-slaves of sin, we shall become freemen of heaven. And if the truth shall make us free, we shall be free indeed.

SERMON III.

MOSES AT THE BURNING BUSH.

“And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush, and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.”—Exodus III. 2.

There is, here, at the early portion of this divine history, an extremely interesting and an extremely important event in the life of Moses. To appreciate this incident, we must bear in mind his previous position in the Palace of the Pharaohs. He had been educated by the Princess, who had adopted him, and who is styled *the* daughter of Pharaoh. On an obelisk which has been dug up very recently in a portion of upper Egypt, in hieroglyphic characters, “the daughter of Pharaoh” is a title applied to one of the royal ladies of this period. We must consider Moses as a Prince in exile, the adopted son of this royal lady, we must go with him into the desert, imagine the lowly occupation to which he was obliged to descend, think of him in a far different scene from that which had been familiar to his early days ;—in the solitary plains of the wilderness near Horeb, alone with great thoughts, and great devotion ; pondering over his duty to his people, and preparing for his glorious career while he was feeding the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law. In this respect we have parallels with many of the illustrious of the earth. Exile and solitude prepare the soul for great things. In our own country’s history, we are reminded at once of Alfred in the isle of Athelney, who had to take refuge in what was then a wilderness of our land. Finding he could no longer maintain the liberties, and defend the persons of his people, he passed into one of the wilds of those times, and was content to live with the herdsman and his wife, and to do humble work with them, and so to wait for better times, communing with his own great griefs and equally great designs and hopes.

This is the representation of Moses, and that of every man who has ever brought out great things for others. It is a law of water always to rise to the level it has left, it can rise no higher, and it is just so in human life. He who does great things amongst men, must first have great thoughts from which they proceed. He who comes forth and makes a name, effects a glory, frees a country, or does ought that will make him beloved for generations to come, and be one of those real princes, true kings of men, who, out of the very urn where their ashes lie, shall still rule and bless mankind for thousands of years; each of these must be one who has pondered over great things; one, who, either in the desert or desert-like city, has retired to be alone with God, to meditate on noble things, to think what God requires of him, to think of heaven, to think of the great needs of his country and mankind, and thus to prepare those high purposes, which shall afterwards be realized and become part of human history, and human blessing. Such are the reflections opened to us by the account of Moses in the desert.

And here allow me to say, that such solitary musing is not for great men alone, or for those gifted ones who stand out as the uncrowned kings of many generations; but it must equally be so with every man who accomplishes important things in his own history. He must be a ponderer over himself, over his past, his present, and his future. He who lives merely in the giddy whirl of present gain or enjoyment, who simply goes to market and sees how much he can make, he who hurries about in the mere toil and business of the day, and has no time for serious or deep thoughts, is never in the way to do that greatest of all great things, to give himself to God, to conquer his evils, and to take those steps that shall eventuate in his being an angel of heaven. Oh! it is a thing surpassing all other things, for a man to know himself, his origin, and his end, and to determine that he will be an angel and not a fiend. The very moment a man enters upon his being, it is a settled matter that he will either be one or the other,—that he will make in himself a little heaven or a little hell, and then enter the abode for which he is prepared. There are his incipient evils,—those impulses to wrong in a man, which will if unchecked, grow to utter ruin; but let it be ever remembered by all of us, we are not hopelessly and entirely sinful, we have impulses to angelic life,—we have germs of heaven within. The Lord took a little child, in order that he might hold it up as a lesson respecting every little child, “of such,” said He, “is the kingdom of God.” Yes! we have germs of heaven within us. No man will ever be lost because he had not the possibilities of

being an angel or an archangel ; but if he smother these, if he destroy his own conscience, if he put down these perpetual uprisings for right which disclose themselves in his nature, he will become an eternal wreck. Often the thought comes to us, at least in the earlier period of our lives, "what a difficult thing it is to be good !" It is equally difficult to become evil. A man cannot make himself into a fiend all at once. There will be celestial impulses, there will be solemn thoughts, there will be angelic presences, there will be truths coming to him in a thousand forms, and good uprising in him also ; and it will take him far more trouble to crush these out and become a fiend, than it would have been to become honest to himself, to mankind, and to God, and thus become an angel, and be happy in heaven for ever. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," the Lord said. The work of Egypt was not easy, the burden there was terrible. A man has to pay most severely on earth for the privilege of going to the infernal world. There is more trouble for him here, more misery for him, more slavery for him, more disgrace for him, more bitterness for him a thousand times than there is for others, that he may have the sad lot of being a devil for ever and ever. Why then does he not take the straight path and live for heaven ? Well then, is it, that these truths should be brought home to every one of us, and that there should be times of solitary thought and quiet reflection. We are to have our wilderness,—our period when there is no one present but God and ourselves, when we may ask ourselves, "shall I be an angel, or shall I heedlessly make my life wretched both in time and eternity." If we act wisely, if we really seek to become servants of the Lord Jesus, then shall we be like Moses,—in our wilderness for a time ; we shall see visions of highest freedom, of hope and joy, and hear the voice of God.

Before adverting to that especial spiritual truth upon which we are disposed to dwell this evening, allow me to draw your attention for a few minutes to the theological lesson which arises from the fact before us, and which is important in its relation to some other doctrines of the Holy Word. We learn from it the mode in which God manifested Himself to Moses, and to the worthies of the Old Testament. It will have occurred, no doubt, to every thoughtful person, that whilst in the Old Testament, and especially in relation to Moses, we find the Word states, that he spoke with God "face to face," and again, "like as a man talketh with his friend," yet in the New Testament we read, as in John i. 18, "no man has seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared

Him." The interview given in this chapter reconciles the discrepancy. God spoke and said, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God." And in the 14th verse it is said, "And God said unto Moses, I am that I am, and He said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you." There is no doubt therefore, that the sacred text intended to teach us, that God Himself was thus revealed to Moses. The mode however, is indicated in verse 2. Before the incarnation, God spoke to man by filling an angel with His Spirit. When God assumed humanity Himself, in which He dwells for ever, for "in Jesus Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily," He spoke with His own mouth. Before the incarnation, when He wished to communicate with any of His creatures on earth, it was by filling an angel with His Spirit for a time, the powers of the angel being suspended, and God using him as an organism. Thus it is said here, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire." You will find this taught in the New Testament likewise. When Stephen was delivering his sermon to those who were about to stone him, he says, "The law was given by the disposition of angels."—Acts vii. 5. And when the Apostle Paul was speaking upon the same subject, he says, "The law was given by angels;" (Heb. ii. 2.) and that apparently difficult passage which occurs a little lower in the same chapter, where it is said in the incarnation, "He took not on Him angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham," (Heb. ii. 2.) teaches the same truth. It is this truth then, that reconciles the varied statements which are frequent in the Sacred Scriptures, that the Lord spoke with Moses, and yet it was not the unclouded essence of the Godhead which was seen or heard, but God acted by means of an angel. It was not God Himself, naked, and in His own unutterable purity and incomprehensible majesty, for no man could thus "see God and live," but it was God appearing and acting through the angelic nature. But when this mode of communication would suffice no longer, then the Everlasting Father appeared in the Son, and the Divine Saviour, the present God, said, "He that seeth me seeth the Father; have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

Having thus dwelt upon the personal history of Moses, as a leader preparing to do the great work, which, in the providence of the Lord, he had to do, and having dwelt somewhat upon the theological bearing of the account of the mode given of the divine appearance to Moses, allow me to ask your attention

while we consider the spiritual sense of this divine event, and see how far it relates to those states and circumstances which are to be experienced in our own inward advancement in the regenerate life. Let me impress upon your attention that in all these circumstances, even the most minute, there is a spiritual meaning as well as a literal one. Moses is represented not only as being near the mount of God, but as feeding the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, and then the Lord revealed himself there to him. You will find a parallel to the record, in that which is given in the earlier part of the Gospel according to St. Luke, respecting the shepherds, to whom the revelation concerning the coming of the Saviour was given. They are described as feeding their flocks by night. And these peculiarities are not merely interesting incidents, but are mentioned for a far higher object. They are to represent to us the condition of soul, which prepares a man for receiving the revelation of the Lord at any time,—“He must be feeding the flock.” And we shall perceive what that condition of soul is, if we bear in mind that flocks in the Sacred Scriptures, are the spiritual emblems, or correspondences, of holy and charitable feelings. The flocks mentally, are the kindly dispositions of love to our neighbour, and every desire to do him good. These form a leading portion in the character of a man who is one of the Lord’s sheep. “My sheep hear my voice,” the Lord says, “and they follow me.” “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd goeth before his sheep, and calleth them by name.” It is precisely in this way, that you will find from time to time in the Sacred Volume those who are truly following the Lord, represented as lambs or as sheep. “Behold I send you forth as lambs,” the Lord says, “in the midst of wolves.” Because the true christian has those innocencies of feeling, those inward affections, that inward guilelessness which disposes him to love the Lord and to do good, without any claim to ostentation, or any feeling, but that lamb-like disposition which desires to follow the Lamb of God. These things in the soul constitute a “little flock” of holy feelings and internal affections of good. The Word says, “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s pleasure to give you the kingdom.”—Luke XII. 32. Now whenever a person who has not yet fairly entered upon his regenerate life, is waiting, wishing, and hoping, in perplexity, darkness and ignorance, one who has a new state breaking in upon him, but yet knows not what the Lord will do for him, or what He will do with him, and while he waits, is cultivating kindness, purity, and prayer, he is spiritually feeding his flock. He comes to the Divine Word, and as far as he is able to see it, he speaks in the spirit that

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is expressed in the 23rd 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, He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." In such a case, although he is yet in a gentile condition, although he knows scarcely anything, and only has a sort of blind aim to do good and be good, he is represented in the Sacred Scriptures,—in the spirit of this history, by Moses in the wilderness keeping the flocks of his father-in-law, and in the Gospel, by the shepherds keeping their flocks by night. Just as the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, just as the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, so will it be with him. You remember that glorious scene in which it is said, first, that the heavens opened and the glory of the Lord appeared, and the *angel* (first one angel,) said unto the shepherds, "Behold unto you, in the city of David, is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord." And then, presently, "a multitude of the heavenly host" were heard "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." Just so will it be with us. One holy ray of light brings us good tidings of great joy, then a whole multitude of hopes, of loves, and joys, break in.

It is said, the angel appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush. On various occasions, when appearances were made to the patriarchs and the prophets, they were represented as appearances of fire. Of course, a novice in divine things as Moses was at that time, will wonderingly note this fact, that there was a flame of fire, and yet the bush was not burnt; and he will marvel, until he is aware, that scenes connected with eternal things are beheld by the spiritual sight being opened, when the soul can see things that are higher than nature, but which do not directly affect nature. We have stated that in the Sacred Books where visions are spoken of, it is not unfrequent to mention fire of the character of that before us. You will remember the vision of Elisha's young man, mentioned in the second book of Kings, vi.—17—19. "And he saw horses and chariots of fire all round about Elisha."

The fire is indeed a beautiful and important portion of this sacred history, for fire is the symbol, in the Word of God, of love,—of celestial love where it is heavenly fire, as here; and of infernal love where infernal fires are described, as in some parts of the Word of God. Celestial fire is the affection of doing good, is the burning desire to bless, such as John had when the Saviour said of him, "he was a burning and a shining light," this glorious fire proceeds from the Lord Himself, who is an infinite fire

of this divine affection, "for God is love." This holy fire gladdens all the angelic minds, and hence it is said, "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers flames of fire."—Ps. civ. 4. This fire descends into the good man's soul to regenerate him, and hence it is said of the Lord, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." The love of the Lord revealing itself to Moses, and through him to every soul which comes into the condition represented by Moses, was signified by this flame of fire. Every earnest soul which has been taking care to feed the flock of good affections, every such soul is at the mount of God, and is having a holy glow within, of this fire of the kingdom of heaven.

We are informed that this fire was seen in a bush ; the literal idea of a bush being that of a series of low trees. In the original language it is somewhat more expressive. The word is not used many times in the Scriptures, but is used on all occasions when this particular circumstance is adverted to. It is a word that signifies plants of the bramble kind, that is, such plants as the raspberry, blackberry, and plants of that description. Thus spiritually, it represents things useful, but of a low kind of use ; plants of this class are nearly related to the rose, but fruit-bearing also. The vegetable world is symbolic of those thoughts and principles which grow up in the mind, like trees grow from seeds. The nobler principles are represented by the nobler trees, the olive, the vine, and the fig. The truths of love to the Lord, charity to man, and obedience, are trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah.—Isa. vi. 3. But in the spiritual world, as representations of spiritual qualities, plants of the bush description are the symbols of the lower things of divine truth ; such things would seem to imply those every-day truths, which, even the humblest man may read and gather for himself. They are the things of the letter of the Word. Compared with higher and more glorious principles which form the spiritual paradise, they are not magnificent, they are only bushes. The Lord says, "I will make your souls, like a watered garden, and like springs of water whose waters fail not." But then these states are found only in the higher stages of the regenerate life, when a man has made great advancement, when the higher things of heaven have been revealed to him, and love cultivated by him. But even amongst the bushes, the divine reveals itself. The flame of fire appears in the bush. When the simple mind is learning, perhaps from the history of Joseph, the troubles through which the patriarch had to pass, and thinks of his own troubles, of his own dangers, of his own perils ; in these simple histories, the divine love shines through to such souls, like the flame of fire in the bush. It speaks to the young man striving

to be good, speaks to the maiden determined that she will live for heaven, such comforting words as these. "Fear not, for I am with thee." "Be not afraid what man can do unto thee." Fear not, even what hell with all its tempting powers can bring around or upon thy soul. "I give thee power to tread upon serpents, and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt thee."

When the divine love thus speaks in its promises, in its consolations, in its exhortations, and urges us to gird up our loins, and begin to work for salvation and for heaven, it is then, just like this flame, a hallowed fire in the bush. Then a man knows that he has an interest in divine things, and resolves to be true and earnest to break up his spiritual slavery, to renounce all the things of evil. He will break loose from his spiritual bonds, and as for Pharaoh and his host, he trusts that they will sink and die before the power of the God of heaven, and he will come out a free man, having the glorious liberty of the children of light. Wherever such is the case, and it is often some particular text or portion of the Word that thus comes home with its holy light and love, then, that is spiritually for him, as it was here for Moses, the flame of fire in the bush when it is not consumed. Oh! it is not consumed; this fire of love does not consume. It is re-creative, it burns with a holy light. All is blessing, cheering, and encouraging. Nothing now makes him afraid, but on the contrary, everything cheers. His heart is filled with holy courage, comfort, and joy.

Such is the sacred lesson which we should learn from the spiritual view of Moses by the burning bush. Let me in conclusion, my beloved friends, again impress upon us all, that this history was written for us. It is not an historical relation simply of what occurred in days gone by. It is given to be realized in its spiritual import by every one of us. Have we commenced our march from Egypt? Have we freed all the impulses of the soul from spiritual slavery? Have we cast off the manacles of sin, and determined to live for heaven? If we have not yet begun, are we meditating and musing upon this great thing? Are we feeding flocks in the desert near the mount of God? Are we taking care, that until our path becomes clear to us, we will do all the good we can, cultivate all that is kindly, and promote the happiness and comfort of our fellow-creatures? Are we doing all this, and thus feeding the flock of our souls? If we do this, we shall find in a little time that we are near the mount of God, for "His righteousness is like the great mountains." And the divine fire will glow to save and warm, but not to consume.

SERMON IV.

MOSES' ROD TURNED INTO A SERPENT.

"And it shall come to pass, that if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land."—Exodus IV. 9.

It seems something of an exceedingly unaccountable and extraordinary character, that after the divine presence to His servant Moses in the burning bush, and after the promise of so great a blessing, that even Moses himself should be found hesitating, fearing lest he should not be delivered, and rather anxious to be excused from the mission to which he was invited by Almighty love and wisdom. Yet such is the evident fact. It is clear, both from the Old Testament and the New, that the Divine Being who manifested Himself to Moses by means of an angel, was the Lord Jesus Christ as He was known before the incarnation. You remember that when His name was asked by Moses, the Divine Speaker said, "I am that I am. Say unto the people, 'I am' hath sent me unto you." And this term is one of such super-excellent majesty, that one may well say it is perhaps the grandest and most appropriate appellation to unfold to us a sublime idea of the Divine Being. "I am hath sent me unto you." A simple but inconceivably grand and glorious name. It exhibits this Divine One as the Being to whom time and all things are intimately present. "I AM"—to whom there is no past, no future, no distant; all is now—"I am." All ages are under my gaze; eternity is as it were a moment under my glance,—"I am."

"To Thee there's nothing old appears,
To Thee great God there's nothing new."

This term and the idea which it incloses, were also known as expressive of the majesty of the Deity in the very early times of Egypt. It was expressed in the hieroglyphics of that remote age by a veiled form in a temple in Upper Egypt. There was an image of Deity with this inscription, "I am all that is, and that

has been, and that will be." This sacred appellation is claimed by our Lord Jesus Christ you will remember in the Gospel: "Before Abraham was, I am."—John VIII. 58. He intended to teach us by this appellation which He Himself used, in His character of Jehovah, the Divine Deliverer of the Israelites, and again, as Jesus the Divine Deliverer of the soul in all ages, that He was the Omnipresent, and when He appeared to John the revelator after His resurrection, you will remember He said, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, who is, and who was, and who is to come—the Almighty." The same glorious person was meant in all these cases.

Well, it is this glorious Divine Being then, who appeared to Moses, and who appeared in that most lovely and affectionate character in which the glow of the holy fire about Him exhibited the splendour of unutterable love, without destruction; and yet here is Moses hesitating, flinching from all that was thus offered to him, and rather wishful to decline the offered work and offered mercy.

Can we conceive of folly more transcendent, can we conceive of conduct more inexplicable, than that of Moses appears to have been, even of Moses,—the man of God? Yes, this folly is our own. To every one of us it is promised that he shall be brought into freedom. The truth will make us free, inwardly free, free from sin, from self, from fear, and from bitter sorrows; through the trials of life we shall be gradually purified, gradually made holier and happier, having in the meantime the highest blessings of earth; and then, as a reward for co-operating with the Lord, while He makes us happier than others on earth, we shall become angels in His glorious kingdom. All this is offered to us, and promised to us, and has been realized in the experience of good men in every age, yet we stand ever hesitating, doubting, fearing, standing back, saying, "they will not believe"; we would rather not undertake it. Precisely as Moses did on this occasion.

Happily, the Lord in His infinite love, when we thus stand back, perseveres with us. We hesitate, as if there was something valuable we had to sacrifice, and we do sometimes talk of the great sacrifices we have to make, as if there were something good we had to give up, something great, something transcendently noble; whereas, all the sacrifice we have to make is to sacrifice the sins which are our curse. We give up our bad tempers, our lusts, our passions, we give up vanities, woe, and misery, in order that we may be truly blest and happy, to-day and onwards.

Such is the folly found in human beings. But the Divine Mercy does not quit us. Happily, God is our Father, and so He

condescended to the weakness of Moses, and He condescends to ours. He proceeded to prove to Moses His divine power. The higher laws of the spiritual world were brought into play in this. By the divine might,—“The staff was turned into a serpent and restored.” He next shewed that disease and health were under His divine control; a hand was made leprous, and then was healed. The created elements are His; the water of the Nile was turned into blood. These wonders were evidences, just as the miracles of our Lord were, that the Creator of the world was there, and offering Himself to man as his leader.

There is not only power, but wisdom and love, in everything done by the Divine Being. And let me invite your attention now to a little close consideration, while we endeavour to ascertain what these remarkable signs meant. There were three signs given. First, the turning of Moses' rod into a serpent and back again; then, his hand being made leprous and healed; and thirdly, the turning of the water into blood. This was the mode by which the Divine Mercy fortified Moses, and by him teaches us eternal things.

Notice first, there is a question put by the Divine Being, “What is that in thine hand?” Moses answered, “It is a rod.” It should be more strictly rendered, “It is a staff.” There is a difference in the Hebrew language between a rod, which is really a sceptre, and a staff, which is a stay for the pilgrim, to enable him to walk more firmly. In the 23rd Psalm both terms are used, “Thy rod and Thy staff they shall comfort me.” The term used here is that which signifies a staff, an assistant to the feet; and it is all important to know this, because in the spiritual lesson derived from sacred history here, the staff is the symbol of that which directs man's spiritual feet, which helps him in his spiritual walking, that is to say, the letter of the Word of God. Do not suppose that there was not really a staff on this occasion, and not really a person named Moses; but bear in mind that these outward literal realities are recorded as gracious symbols of spiritual realities, that are the same to us now in our spiritual journey, and in our efforts after spiritual freedom, as the literal things were to the literal Israelites, and to the literal Moses.

Moses himself, in spiritual things, is the symbol of God's law in the soul, when it has become, a conscience, an inward law, an inward power of goodness and truth, an epitome as it were, of all religion, and of the whole Word of God. This is expressed by our Divine Saviour when He says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, 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.

There is, in every history, in every narrative, in every portion of the different laws that the Israelites were under, and in their whole history, an inner essence, and this essence is,—the Law of God when it is received and implanted in the human soul, which is to us what Moses was to the Israelites, our leader, our inward guide. This inner power of the Word, this inner light which is the soul of all divine revelation, has a staff, that staff is the letter of the Word. The letter of the Word is to us what Moses' staff was to him ; it is an assistance to our feet. How beautifully this is described in the Psalms, where the distinction between the Spirit and the letter of the Bible is given, by these expressive words :—“Thy Word is a light unto mine eyes and a lamp to my feet.” Where “the light to the eyes” means the spirit of heavenly wisdom which the intellect discerns, but the “lamp unto the feet” means the instruction which the letter of the Word gives us, to tell us how to live. The letter of the Word is thus a staff, and hence, in the passage already quoted, “when thou passest through the valley of the shadow of death thou shalt fear no evil ; for I am with thee, my rod and my staff shall comfort thee.”

Whenever any miracle was wrought, representative of the divine miracles which are wrought during our spiritual regeneration, Moses was there ; not Moses alone, but Moses with his staff ; because it is by the Word of the Most High in the letter, in harmony of course with the spirit, that all divine strength is given. We may have trouble, we may have difficulty or danger, we may feel our weakness, however much, yet if we are but sincere, divine power will be given to us ; but always in some divine words. These divine words are the sword, the staff, the delivering power, “The sword of the spirit,” the Apostle says, “is the Word of God.” “Is not my Word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces.”—Jer. xxiii. 29. This power of the literal sense of the Word when truly understood, and in the hand of one who also feels that the spirit of the Word is “love thy God and love thy neighbour,”—is signified by Moses with his staff in his hand. The Divine Being further said, “Cast it on the ground,” and thus the staff becomes separated from Moses, and then it represents the letter of the Word separated from its spirit, not having regeneration for its aim ; the letter of the Word looked at merely as an earthly composition, not having for its object the conversion of the human heart from sin to

righteousness. It is then food for wrangling, for vanity, and for self. In such case, the staff, lying separated from Moses, turns into a serpent.

You remember that remarkable declaration of the Apostle Paul, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Moses himself was horrified at it, and fled from before it. And is it not so? Has not all history taught us the same truth? What was it that the Bishop of Natal found so great a serpent, that it induced him to give up all confidence in the divine authority of the written Word of God? Was it not taking those records of the scriptures which are intended to foreshadow to us the new and inward creation, and regarding them as scientific descriptions? He esteemed the Divine Book only as a merely earthly book. Thus he laid the staff on the ground. Then he tried it by arithmetic and geology, and declared it false, it turned out to be a serpent. Every part of the Word of God treated in the same way will yield similar results. What wars have been so destructive, what wars so cruel, as religious wars, and what has been the origin of them? Why, taking the outward wars and cruelties which are recorded in the letter of the Israelitish history as patterns for us to follow, instead of understanding them, as spiritual types, to teach us to struggle against the giants of sin,—the lusts and passions, the stubborn foes within us. When men have been turned from fighting against their evils, to fight against their fellows and to destroy those who opposed them, the staff has become a serpent.

The Lord said, further, "Stretch forth thine hand and take it again by the tail," and Moses did so, and it became a rod again. This act is representative of taking the Word again in its exact letter, taking it in its exact literal sense and making it the instrument of the spiritual sense. This is done when we discern the correspondences of the very terms of the letter, with those spiritual and divine things which live within the letter. Then the serpent becomes a heavenly rod again, a staff to the christian's feet, a help for his pilgrimage. When it was insisted that the Lord's words, "except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood ye have no life in ye," meant that we were somehow or other to get hold of the very body of the Lord which suffered on Calvary, and eat the flesh and drink the blood, thus becoming cannibals, to enter into the kingdom of heaven; or when we are told that a little bit of wafer,—a small proportion of flour from the baker's shop, could be transformed into the very same body and blood; when this dogma is accepted, the soul gives up its noblest powers, confesses to the falsehood of its senses and of its rationality, and leaves the spirit of the Word of God,—The staff is turned into a serpent. The

enfeebled and blinded soul surely becomes the slave of its priestly seducer, and prostrates itself before a man, instead of standing erect in the light of God. Would he but take the serpent by the tail, lay hold of the exact expressions, and apply them to the soul, he would see that by the flesh is meant, that divine flesh of holy goodness, which is the substance of our Lord ; and the blood, the liquid part of the body, the holy blood of divine wisdom, which is the outflowing of the Spirit of our Lord. Let these be received into the heart and the intellect, and you will have eternal life ; the life of all that is good and true. The serpent is gone, the staff is there. And so it is with every one of these divine lessons, they teach us this,—Live for eternity, and then the whole Word will be to you a staff. Live for self, continue in evil, and then, even the Word of God, which is life's highest blessing, will be to you a serpent and a curse.

The next command was, "Put thine hand into thy bosom," and he put his hand into his bosom and it became leprosy. By the hand, in the spiritual sense, is represented power for goodness. Hence, "the hand of God" means "the power of God." "Thy right hand O Lord hath dashed in pieces the enemy."—Ex. xv. 6.

Before regeneration, when man is carnally minded, with his "heart deceitful above all things,"—when he will not come out of Egypt and enter upon his march toward the spiritual Canaan, all the power for good that the Lord has given him is then merely the power of a decent courtesy, a cover to an inward selfishness. There can be no real goodness within, and hence the hand is leprous and profane. Leprosy was a very horrible disease that used to be much more common here than it is. It prevailed largely in the East, and does so still. It is a rottenness of the body, in which there is a disgusting and exceedingly painful corruption of the parts, fatal to comfort, beauty, strength, health, and life. There are chapters in the book of Leviticus, entirely taken up with the treatment directed to be used by the priests, in relation to this awful disease. Time will not permit us to go into the particulars, but we may easily perceive what is meant by the representative disease. It is that condition of soul when there is an appearance of religion, of amiability, but underlain by a heart, corrupt, selfish, rotten, and hypocritical.

This profanation of good and heavenly things, and its removal, as represented by leprosy and its cure, is very strikingly brought before us, in the account of the leprosy and the cure of Naaman the Syrian. He was cured, you will recollect, by washing in the Jordan seven times,—representative of the way in which spiritual

health is given to every one who has got into this corrupt state of soul. The Word of God being used to purify the soul again and again, until it is healed as Naaman was. On the seventh time of his ascending out of Jordan, it is said, "his flesh became as the flesh of a little child." The servant of Elisha on the other hand, prostituted the position which he had near his master, and went afterwards to make money out of the prophet's powers, and to get Naaman to give him what his master had rejected. The result was, that, having thus prostituted and profaned his position, the prophet said to Gehazi, "Let the leprosy of Naaman cleave to thee for ever." Leprosy, then, in the Sacred Scriptures, is representative of the profanation of religion to selfish purposes. And when the hand of Moses was first of all put into his bosom, and then drawn out, and was seen to be leprous, it was to teach us, that, before regeneration, even our amiabilities and courtesies have selfishness in them. It is not from charity, but from the love of self, that we do things genial, generous, and noble. There is leprosy right through us, and out of the corrupt heart there comes hypocrisies which corrupt everything else.

The Almighty next said, "Put thine hand into thy bosom again," for now is represented the healing which comes from regeneration. Let religion, let faith, let obedience be thine, and thy leprosy will disappear. Put thy hand into thy bosom again. Be born again. Thou wilt find there is balm in Gilead; there is a physician there.

Lastly, it is said, "If they will not believe also these two signs." "Thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land, and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood." This water of the Nile has a very interesting signification. In the Word of God, water corresponds to truth, because truth is heavenly water, and does for the soul, that which earthly water does for the body, and for the earthly life. The river of Egypt is peculiar; the waters of other lands generally descend right from the sky, and refresh the countries upon which they fall. There are rain, dew, and snow, and all the various ways in which water is given to the earth. But in Egypt, although the whole of the country depends upon its river, it so seldom rains, that ordinarily speaking, it is said to be the land in which there is no rain. All its water is derived from rains which fall on the mountains and plains at an immense distance away, in the interior of Ethiopia and other parts of Africa.

The river of Egypt in the spiritual sense, is representative not of the direct teaching of the Most High, not of spiritual wisdom direct from heaven, but of that indirect teaching which we call

scientific truth, which is really obtained from the Lord, but remotely. Everything scientific comes from heaven, as well as every truth of the most spiritual and celestial character. It comes indirectly, through great minds which have been opened to the Lord, and have grasped spiritual things, and embodied them in beauty and in use.

There is a great river of science and art, around which the mental Egypt is formed. Art, literature, and science, make all the glories which compose THE WORLD. They are but the inner world brought out, the shell surrounding that which really lives. The last miracle of taking of the water of the river of Egypt, and pouring it upon the ground, and its becoming blood, was intended to teach, that, without regeneration, all our science is violated and darkened.

What is all science that is not leavened by religion? Ask those, who, possessing some of the mightiest of human endowments,—have possessed unequalled scientific knowledge, have yet had such aching of heart, such pain from inner vanity, such voracity for vain applause, that life was no life to them, or but a bitter mockery, and even suicide itself is accepted. What is the worth of poetry, when the poet is unblest by religion? Ask Byron, who, in his last days, though still in early manhood, uttered the melancholy cry at the age of thirty-six,

“My days are in the yellow leaf
And all the life of Life is gone,
The worm, the canker and the grief,
Are mine alone.”

He had poured the Nile's waters on the ground, and they had become blood. The Egyptians loathe to drink of the water. We must live for heaven, or life is an utter mockery. Science separated from heavenliness is violated, broken, withered, and dead. This is what the divine mercy teaches by the third sign: and when we understand this, can we not then go forth as it were from the presence of God, and say, *I will* live for heaven, *I will* dare to be good, *I will* dare to conquer all those impulses in me, which promote the reign and government of self and the world. “For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.” I will not let my staff become a serpent; I will not live so as to have a leprosy entering all I do; I will not turn water into blood; I will obey my God and Saviour, and go and say to the Pharaoh of every sin that rules within me:—The Lord says, “let my people go.” I will march out of my Egypt, pass over my Red Sea, and advance onwards and upwards, until I come into that Canaan-like state, of which it is said, “The kingdom of God is within me.”

SERMON V.

THE CHARGE OF MOSES AND AARON TO PHARAOH.

"And, afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."—Exodus v. 1.

The scene, the marvellous scene of the divine appearance to Moses, is represented as having taken place in the land of Midian, in the desert near the mount of God. This was a description, when spiritually understood, of that which always takes place in one form or another, when the soul is brought into contact with mighty and redeeming thoughts. But the scene upon which we are now about to enter is equally solemn, though very different.

We have Moses ; after his doubts, his hesitations, the objections which he saw, or fancied he saw in his mission have been removed ; after the distance between the desert, far off in Midian, and the abode of Pharaoh in Egypt, has been traversed by him ; and the difficulty that he felt in not being a good speaker, was removed by the Divine Providence associating his brother with him in the mission ; the same Divine Providence directed Aaron to meet him ; and while the one brother was coming up from Midian, the other was traversing the desert from Egypt. They met on the mount of God, and they kissed one another ; and then Moses told his brother, from whom he had been parted forty years, the wonderful things which had happened. Aaron was delighted at finding that some way for the redemption of his people was being opened by the Almighty Being, whom they both worshipped. And then they returned together to enter upon their eventful work.

First of all, they went to the elders of the children of Israel to deliver their message, and obtain from them their acquiescence. They all adored the God of Heaven : and, after this, Moses and Aaron went into the palace of the Pharaohs'. It is their presence in this palace, the objects which they sought to

accomplish, and the special truths that come out of the discourse, which occurred between them and the king of Egypt, that we wish to make the subjects of our present remarks. And, in the first place, just think what a solemn and eventful scene it must have been for both brothers. The palace of the Pharaohs' was the very abode of magnificence; even now, the world has seen no grandeur more magnificent, no splendour of architecture surpassing that, which, at the time of this interview, embellished Memphis. Here were these two lowly men, daring to confront the mightiest monarch of the earth at that time, and one whose insolence and whose cruelty had made it no slight task to deliver their hateful demands. But Moses was no coward now. He never more quailed. He was filled with holy courage. The two delivered their simple message, "The Lord God of Israel says, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." The scene is full of splendour.

The circumstance of these simple-hearted men, taking their lives in their hands as it were, and confronting the most powerful monarch of the earth at that time, has a grandeur about it that requires a little reflection even to master, but, a grandeur that teaches us this, that, if we have the truth, if we feel we are in harmony with the God of heaven, if our hearts have made acquaintance with the law of righteousness of the King of kings, neither powers nor potentates of the earth should hinder our statement of the truth, or our adherence to its dictates. It is one of the mistakes least sanctioned in the Bible, yet too often made, and that the mere votaries of wealth and dignity are constantly making; that our principles and habits should be determined by numbers, age, rank, or fashion; these imagine we should follow in the wake of power, and obey parliaments, popes, or councils, rather than the dictates of truth to the conscience, rather than the Word of the Almighty. Not so with Moses! Not so with the Prophets! The pomp of the Pharaohs', the splendour of their priesthood, the antiquity of their nation, the magnificence of the monuments amongst which he stood were nothing to Israel's leader. He had heard the voice of God. He trod the path of duty.

The request of the leaders was, that the people should go three days' journey in the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord their God. The manner in which Moses words it, is interesting; it contains a very beautiful shade of idea, and one which is full of important truth. He said, "That we may go and hold a feast unto the Lord our God;" and this is the true idea of worship. Real religion is not a yoke to shackle us,—a something to

destroy our real comfort or joy; religion is to be a feast to us. The Lord our God has commanded us to say "Let my people go that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

Oh! how strangely have they mistaken the God of heaven and the laws of religion, who have supposed that piety comes to take away the innocent enjoyments of the world, who imagine that it is irreligious to be happy, and suppose that God is extremely pleased with a gloomy visage and demeanour, ever miserable, and mournfully sad; as if the Lord we worship had not placed a grand sun in the centre of the solar system to shed light, life, and beauty over the whole world. Why! if those mischievous professors of religion had had the making of the universe, the sun would have been black and scowling; the flowers would have been sad; the birds would not have sung hymns of joy, but screamed out doleful notes; and all this beautiful world, instead of being what it is, would have been shrouded over with a dark pall, doleful as the world below. Oh no! it is not so. Religion is not a gloomy thing; it comes to take away every cause of gloom. "I come not to take away your joy," the Lord says, "but that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

All things teach us, if we will but learn the lesson, that the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound, and walk in the light of His countenance," (Ps. LXXXIX. 15.) who is goodness itself, wisdom itself, beauty itself, and happiness itself. The true tone of each member of the human race is to say in the language of the Psalmist, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being, my meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." It is in harmony with this then; that, when the people are spoken of by Moses as called by the Lord to go and worship Him, it was to go to have a feast,—it was to go and be made happier than ever they had been,—to go and leave their sorrows, their oppressed condition, and their miseries behind them, and to enter upon a new course of freedom, light, and love. "Let us go and make a feast unto the Lord our God."

But what were they doing then? They were under the yoke of Pharaoh; and Pharaoh replied insolently to the message, and said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

In considering the spiritual lesson in the divine account before us, as well as in the whole history of the Israelites, we must reject the notion, dreamed two hundred years ago, and which men called philosophy,—that the soul is an atom, a monad,

a breath, a line, or something without parts, so very fine that nothing finer could be supposed. This idea became a doctrine; a doctrine which entered into false theology as well as into false science, (in fact they always go pretty nearly together,) and consequently, its believers arrived at the doctrine, that a soul is a something that has no substance and no form, that is to say, the very same definition that a person might give if he were asked to define nothing at all. The Sacred Scriptures pourtray the soul, under the representation of a kingdom,—a little universe. It is a universe in disorder.

The representation in this narrative, of evil opposing the God of heaven, is that of an arrogant, defiant, and resisting sovereign, and his oppressive kingdom; and this is the true description of a sinful state. It is not a subtle essence only, it is an organized arrangement of evil in the soul. It has a king: the chief power which reigns there over all the rest, is represented by Pharaoh here. There is the love of self, in that peculiar form of self-hood,—the subtle, central, ruling sin in which the soul indulges. There are an inconceivable number of passions and evils; but that which a man loves chiefly, is the king in him.

But under this ruling evil, represented here by Pharaoh, there are vast numbers of subordinate sinful propensities:—pride, obstinacy, envy, hatred, self-complacency; which form an inner council round this horrid king. Then he has his parliament:—all those persuasions which flatter his propensities and lusts:—self-conceit, self-derived intelligence, false-reasoning, false-science; all flatter the ruling sin. There are crowds of emotions, ideas, sentiments, and sensations, which are subjects, passing to and fro; everything obeying sin instead of obeying the law of our Divine Governor. Our Lord says, upon this subject, "The kingdom of God is as when a strong man armed keeps his palace, until a stronger than he comes in and takes his goods from him, and overcomes him." That is precisely the picture presented by the Divine Word before us. There is Pharaoh,—a strong man in his own conceit. There is a king insolent against the King of Heaven.

Moses and Aaron represent the law of God. Moses, the law lighted up afresh in the soul, and now teaching what religion requires; and Aaron, the doctrine of religion taught, perhaps in childhood,—the doctrine of religion which explains and enforces the requirements of the law. These two arise in the soul; they command the soul to let all the holy principles of religion come forth. But the master-passion of sin always says like Pharaoh, "Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him?" Thus David says, "The transgression of the wicked hath said in his heart *there*

is no God." Precisely the same thing is said here, "Who is Jehovah?" I adore no Deity. I am my own Deity. "Who is Jehovah?" Put into distinct language, one feels not only revolted at its blasphemy, but astonished at its absurdity: a poor worm, a creature of yesterday, a being whose every pulsation results from a life that he cannot command and cannot create, who depends upon God for every breath; that such a being should say "Who is Jehovah?"—should set himself up as a defier of the eternal Creator and Redeemer of all things, is most marvelous; and yet it is precisely what every sinful man does. The lust, the passion, the propensity, whatever it is that a person regards as higher than the will of God, is just such a defiant king. I have often said, that, if the self-will, if the unholy sentiment that is at the back of all rebellion, (for every crime is some form of selfishness); if this feeling could be taken out of the unregenerate heart, and be shewn to a man, and we could say, now this is the thing that you are allowing to be your king, nay, your god; that you are putting instead of the authority of Him who made heaven and earth, and who keeps you in existence, he would shrink from it with horror. Those who are at all familiar with the history of the dark portions of the earth, know that there are some abominably ugly things produced as the gods whom the people worship; but if the abominable sentiment, the lust, passion, or sin that resists the commands of God in a human heart, and which the sinner is preferring to the government of Him who is Love Itself; if this could be held up and shown to the man, he would say,—Well, this is the foulest mass of ugliness that ever existed. And yet this is it which is represented here by Pharaoh; and all the inferior arrangements of this king's palace are just representatives of the principles of evil and falsehood, which are in the human mind, and form a hideous kingdom there.

This king held the Israelites as slaves, making bricks for him. It will be interesting to those who wish to see the Word of God in all its force, and who believe that in its historical parts it is literally true, to know, that, amongst the disinterred records of Egyptian ancient grandeur, referring to the time at which these transactions must have occurred; amongst other interesting matters, there are a vast quantity of bricks made of clay mixed with straw, and also a pictorial representation, on a wall, of people with Jewish faces making such bricks,—a picture disinterred after having been buried more than three thousand years; a testimony thus, to the literal exactness of what is recorded in the divine history.

But the things recorded, and the divine account here given, are all subservient to the spiritual lesson. Spiritually, all evil persons are engaged in making bricks for stone ; first with straw, and then without straw. We will just enquire a little into the meaning of this. Stone, in the Sacred Word, and in the nature of things, is the symbol of divine truth, and hence, the Lord Himself is called the Rock of Israel, the Stone of Israel. From the use of stones we learn their correspondences. They are admirable for foundations, and for walls. The foundations for the human soul are the truths of religion. There are no other foundations upon which our hopes, sentiments, feelings, and well-being can truly rest. Hence, the apostle Paul says, "No other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Head-Stone of the Corner, the Stone which the builders rejected. Our Lord described the same correspondence, when in the parable with which He finished His glorious sermon on the mount, He said, "If any man hear my words, and doeth them, I will tell you to whom he is like. He is like unto a man who 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." The rock there, being thus a representation of divine truth, and the stones got from the rock representing the principles that are derived from divine truth, which are built up into forms of doctrine, which are defences like walls for the soul. When truths are cemented by a love for them, they are like stones, not only rightly shaped, but well laid together, and then they make a city,—that city of which it is beautifully said in the Psalms, "Jerusalem is built like a city that is compact together." No assault then can burst through the walls of the city of God. They are firm against whatever evils or enemies may strive to overthrow them.

But when persons are in love with sin, they frame excuses for its indulgences, and care nothing for truths : brick have they for stone, and slime for mortar : fallacy have they for truth, and lust for love : fancies have they instead of eternal principles : even their virtues are made to lean to vice. Now, Pharaoh commanding these people to make bricks, is representative of the work of such souls. No person falls into sin at once ; he must coax himself to wrong. Religion is all very well, but in his particular case it will not do ; there is something in his business, or something in his position which will not answer with strict integrity, and he must do as other people do. He is young, and it's time enough to be serious ; he does not go so far wrong, only a

little ; there will be time enough to repent, and God is merciful. The sinner has every day a thousand reasons for delay and self-indulgence. All this is just sin causing him to make bricks. Straw helps him to do it pretty well at first, because straw or chaff in the Scriptures represents the appearances of truth—the shallow outsides of things, and those who form themselves by them.

To a young person sin seems pleasant ; to one a sinful life seems a merry one ; to another unprincipled gain seems the way to prosperity ; insolent power seems delightful. Many seem to become powerful and great by ways that are far from being what truth and justice approve. Thus the young man is led to say,—The right thing is to get rich ; get rich if you can with truth, if not, with lies. Give yourself entirely to worldly indulgences ; there is not so much danger in it, you can take care of yourself. Thus plenty of bricks are made, and there is abundance of straw ; but after a while, his illusions begin to vanish ; when he comes into closer contact with vice, he finds that the beings with whom he herds, are coarse, brutal, disgusting creatures, with whom it is dreary to live, and dreadful to think of dying. The straw is gone altogether. He cannot now deceive himself. He finds sin a curse. He would fain leave off his brick-making, but his ruling love does not allow him. He must pretend he is all right. He must pretend he is happy. Sin commands him to make bricks, and now, without straw. He must work in the dreary round of vice, but it does not cheat him now. He knows it is wretchedness as well as wickedness. Habit drags him on ; he has got into such a condition that he sins and does not delight in it. He is pulled forward by his lust, and he is cursed while he is dragged along, and he loathes himself as he goes.

On one of the most ancient tombs of Egypt, there is a representation which shows, that, they understood the principles of religion then, as we understand them (only with greater fulness) now. There is a representation of the God of wisdom judging mankind. One is in front of him with scales to weigh men as they come up. One of the wicked is represented as going away, like an ape driving a pig,—the emblems of their loathsome lusts, and their ape-like folly. Others are seen striking their heads ; sin punishes itself. This, then, is what is meant by the graphic declaration of the Word before us. The wicked, after having begun to make bricks with straw, are compelled to make them without straw. Happy is it if they yearn and groan under the power of evil until sin becomes intolerable. The soul has

many changes and bitter feelings when it is in the condition represented here. First of all, it tries to break its fetters, but it fails; then, in the sad wretchedness by which man learns that he cannot redeem himself, he turns round and says,—well, then, why does not religion let me alone? You, Moses and Aaron, have come, and instead of getting better I have become worse. Had not you better go away? The soul is thus tempest-tossed, and turns first on one side for help, and then to the other, and it is in this way that it is drawn to know, that help alone can come from the great Redeemer—God Himself. But before deliverance, there is always this kind of distress, discouragement, and despair, which are represented here by the afflicted people turning first on one side, and then on the other. Then comes the voice of the eternal Saviour, in the consolatory language of the first verse of the next chapter, which permit me, in closing, to commend to your deep consideration, “Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh.” You cannot deliver yourselves; it is time, for you are ground down and ruined, almost ready to die. Man’s necessity is my opportunity. “Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord.” Whenever this state of things is ended, it is by the Lord our Saviour,—that Divine Person who said, “Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am,”—descending into the stricken spirit, lighting up a new lamp of faith in the intellect, acting with this divine power upon the heart, and enabling the soul to come into such a blessed state of life and light as to know how true are the words, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.”

SERMON VI.

THE NAME OF JEHOVAH NOT KNOWN TO THE FATHERS.

"And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."—Exodus VI. 3.

This passage has always appeared difficult to those who have thoughtfully read the Scriptures. They are aware that the word Jehovah is very frequently to be found in the original language of the Scriptures, long before this period. It occurs in the second chapter of Genesis, and in the record of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Of late, this passage has assumed still greater importance than usual, for, it is the key to that argument against the authenticity and divinity of the Divine Word, which has lately been imported into this country, and made somewhat familiar amongst us by the Bishop of Natal. The argument stands something like this:—We take this passage precisely as it is stated, we understand it to mean that the word Jehovah as the name of God, had never been given to the Israelites before this period; and, if that be allowed, then every passage having the word Jehovah in it, must have been written after this time, and, therefore, is not authentic revelation, but a pious legend written long after the time to which it professedly relates. By this mode of understanding the facts, the whole of Genesis, all the accounts of the early dealings of Divine Providence with the patriarchs, must necessarily be considered to have been written after this period, and consequently are to be regarded as fictitious narratives, and not divine revelations. They were written probably for edification, but are human legends, not divine compositions. They were not collected by Moses, revealed to Moses, or written by Moses. The name Jehovah is supposed to have come into use about the time of the prophet Samuel.

Such is the argument that has been put forth, and, on the strength of it, we are expected to conclude that the five books of Moses were productions of some unknown authors, which the Jewish people,—the most obstinate against innovations of any known nation,—adopted without opposition or complaint, and made their law both for worship and for life. According to this same argument, the Jewish nation adopted all their peculiar, minute, and burdensome regulations, extending to every act of their lives, gave up their idolatry, and their paganism, without any authority, divine leadership, or warrant, without in fact any known cause. They have no history, if these books are not their history. They have been so pertinacious as not to receive Christianity amid all the persecutions and inducements pressed upon them for nearly two thousand years; yet we are to believe they accepted the Mosaic Law without a murmur, without a proof, without hesitation, and without a hint even in their history that they had done so, a change, a hundred times more decided than the change from Judaism to Christianity. Some one in the days of Samuel told them, we are to suppose, that they had been led out of Egypt by means of stupendous miracles, and under a leader called Moses; who had given them the books of his law which had never been heard of before, had instituted the worship of one God, under the pretence that they had worshipped Him as their national God for five centuries, although they knew they had not; and that they had practised the passover and the other sacrifices and ceremonies of the law for five hundred years, although they had never heard of them until these books without authors were introduced for their acceptance. And we are to believe that the Jews took all this so quietly, that not a trace of it appears in their history. Surely, this is an enormous superstructure to erect upon so slight a foundation, nay, upon no foundation whatever, for according to the argument, this revelation to Moses never happened at all, and therefore God never appeared to him, and never said to him the words which form the base of the argument itself. Unbelief is very credulous; it will admit almost anything except the sublime truths of our Father in heaven, immortality and religion.

They who are so ready to assume interpolations in the Scriptures might easily have supposed these words to be an interpolation, and then the difficulty for them would disappear. They have, however, chosen the most difficult and most unlikely construction of these words. Was it because the recommendation of this extraordinary construction was, that thus men could best be

deprived of the hope and the comfort which flow from a trust in the Word of God ?

What, however, are the facts of the case before us ? We are told that the name Jehovah was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but that He appeared unto them as God Almighty, or, as the Hebrew says, God Shaddai, or the Thunderer. We find, however, the name Jehovah in the narratives long before the times of the patriarchs alluded to, also in their histories, and even in addresses and prayers uttered by themselves. How can these facts be reconciled ? Probably thus : There was a Bible before the present Bible. It is alluded to in Numbers *xxi.* 14., and called the Book of the Wars of Jehovah ; another portion of it is called the Book of them that speak in proverbs, or more correctly, prophecies, *v.* 27. These two portions answering to the law and the prophets of the subsequent Bible. That ancient Bible, would, it is more than probable, be written in a language more ancient than the Hebrew.

Since Moses could not have spoken of the matters which occurred, hundreds, and some of them thousands of years before his time, from any knowledge of his own, he must have had them either from immediate revelation, or from that more ancient Word. If taken from that more ancient Word and translated into the Hebrew, he would render the term in that more ancient language which was the equivalent for Jehovah, by this, then, new term given to the Hebrews ; and this portion of the Word with the Word he was himself inspired to write, made the book of the law, which he gave to the Levites to place in the ark of the covenant, for a witness to all succeeding ages.—*Deu.* *xxxi.* 24—26. The Hebrew term, Jehovah, was then new ; but Moses in translating the ancient Word to make it correspond with his own, would, like all translators do, use the equivalents in his own language for the more ancient names of the old. Their histories had gone under the hand of Moses, and he used the names of the Lord as they had been divinely revealed to him. This simple, easy, and natural explanation, we have, no doubt, is the true one, and it removes the whole difficulty out of the way.

So much as to the literal name Jehovah ; but now let us consider the spiritual use of that, and other names. Let us take, for instance, the first chapter of Genesis ; you will find there, that the Divine Being is everywhere mentioned, from the first verse to the last, simply by the name "God." God made the light. God divided the waters, and God made man. Everything is done by God. But in the second chapter you will find a change of the

appellation. The Lord (Jehovah) God made the earth and the heavens, v. 4. Jehovah God formed man, v. 7. Jehovah God planted a garden. Jehovah God took man, v. 15. This is not an imperfection, it is a perfection. It is not a mark of want of inspiration; but it is the result of inspiration, that everything connected with the Word of God, every term, every appellation, should be used with the nicest discrimination, and should thus convey the most beautiful and interesting spiritual information. The name "God" in the original, signifies power, and it is a word used throughout the Sacred Volume to represent the divine truth. It is that by means of which God's power is exerted; for the Lord defends man by truth, the Lord defeats falsehood by truth, the Lord breaks down error by truth. He built up the universe, and He builds up heavenly states in the soul, by truth. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made." Thus God's power is exerted. Light is let in, and darkness passes away. Hence, all the early work which truth effects when building up the church, or regenerating man, is represented by the six days of creation in the first chapter of Genesis, representing the way in which heaven and heavenly order are introduced, and true principles formed in the human soul. This is done by truth, and therefore is all stated to be done by God. But when we come to a higher degree of the regenerate life, and man becomes completely happy because Divine Love rules him, then, all the operations are stated to be done by Jehovah God, because Jehovah is the Divine Love. In the Hebrew language, Jehovah signifies HE WHO IS and WHO WILL BE. It is representative of the divine love of God—of that which is the very essence of the divinity—"God IS LOVE." The power of God is truth, but the nature of God is LOVE. "He," says St. John, "that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love."

Love, then,—the very essence of divinity, the very inmost nature of the Divine Being from which all other things come, as from their fountain, is what is represented by Jehovah. If you read the Psalms, and pay a little attention to the exact arrangement of these names, you will find a beauty springing out of them that has never occurred to you before. "I will call upon God, and the Lord (Jehovah) shall save me."—Ps. LV. It is not in order to avoid a mere repetition that this change in the name occurs; you will see a divine propriety in it when you remember the meaning of these two names. "I will call upon God;" I will address myself to the Divine Wisdom. I will look for divine teaching and help. But it is Divine Love that saves.

You may have as much intelligence as you please, but that (although it is the way of salvation,) is not salvation itself. When the Divine Love descends into the heart of a man who has been heaven-taught, then he is saved. "I will call upon God, but the Lord will save me." Again, Ps. LVI. "In God I will praise His Word; in the Lord (Jehovah) will I praise His Word."

We praise the Word, when we are influenced by its truth, but still more when we glow with its divine love. It is for this interior divine reason, that the declaration of the Word before us is, that Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob knew him as God the Thunderer, God Almighty, but they had not been able to know His name Jehovah. They had known the awful thunder of His truth, but as yet they were not able to enter into the perception of His divine love.

Further, to know the Divine Being, and to know His name, is not simply to be acquainted with the sounds of which His name consists; for it is with the Divine Being as it is with a human being; you may be thoroughly aware of the appellation by which he is known, but you may still be very far from knowing him. A person may be quite aware of there being a God, of His divine powers, of the term by which He is designated, but yet may not at all know God. "He that loves God, knows God." It is beautifully said by the apostle John, "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." No other person really can know Him. He may be acquainted with the term as we said; a child may know the name of Jesus, may know the Word Almighty, may know the term Deity, but may have no conception of the real character of that Being who is understood by those glorious expressions. A person grows in understanding divine things as he grows in goodness. The Divine Being seems better and better, all the way through our regenerate life; and never, except in proportion as we become really God-like, are we able to grasp the real character of the Lord, and absolutely to know the God we love. It is in this sense therefore, that the Divine Being uses the words of our text, "I appeared unto Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, as God the Thunderer; but my name Jehovah did I not make them to know"; which is the exact rendering of the original Hebrew.

Jehovah was not known to the most ancient Church, signified by Adam. The name was less familiar, though still known by the ancient Church, signified by Noah. But in the degradation of

their descendants, through thousands of years, it was lost. They became mere idolaters, including Abraham himself. When Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob came into the land of Canaan, and went through the course in which Divine Providence watched over and guarded them, and caused their lives to be written as a divine allegory, (Gal. iv. 24.); although, they had again a word equivalent to Jehovah revealed to them, they only understood it as meaning a local God, the God of their families. The real nature of God, as he is, and as the name of Jehovah imports when it is understood, they were not prepared to know, and therefore they could not know. It is on this ground that the Lord says, "I did not make your fathers to know"; that is to say, to understand, to perceive, to enter really into the name "Jehovah." In fact, this is always the case: whenever a person is in the state in which he becomes first acquainted with the Deity, he is enabled to understand that there is a God, a heaven, and a hell; but he has no real conception of what this God is, nor of what heaven and hell are. He conceives of God as a powerful Being, that He is God the Thunderer. He, perhaps, raises his ideas still higher, and conceives that God is the Being who built up the universe, who creates suns and worlds, and who sustains everything. But even to know this, is not to know Jehovah. The pity, the tenderness, the mercy, the depths of love, the infinitude of forgiveness, the all-sufficiency of grace wrapped up in that glorious name, it takes a whole regeneration to know. A person cannot conceive this, except in proportion as his own state has become purified more and more. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

The Jews in the time of our Lord, supposed that they, the peculiar people to whom it had been proclaimed, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," had a correct knowledge of God. But what did our Lord say to them? "Ye neither know me nor my Father. He that knoweth me, knoweth Him that sent me. No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." Now it is this kind of knowledge,—the only real knowledge, we can have of the Divine Love,—that is meant in the latter part of our text, when it is said, "that they did not know,"—"they were not made to know" the name of Jehovah.

It is because of the want of the knowledge of God as a Being of infinite love, that there is such a difficulty with the merely natural man in understanding the glorious doctrine that grows out of it,—that the Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah manifest.

The natural man cannot but see, that the prophets constantly proclaim, that, Jehovah would become man's Redeemer and Saviour, but thinking only of the awful greatness and majesty of God Almighty, he shrinks from accepting the truth; he cannot conceive it possible for the Eternal God to become a man. And so long as he thinks only of outward greatness and power, the difficulty will remain, but let him think of the love of a mother, how soon it casts dignity aside to save her perishing child; then let him think of the love of Him from whom the love of all the mothers in the universe has come, let him think of our Heavenly Father seeing His children perishing, not into temporal, but eternal death, and no rescue but from Himself, no rescue but from such a manifestation of His love, as to draw their hearts to Him, at the same time that He removed the power of hell from them, and gave them liberty and light. If the salvation of myriads of souls required our Heavenly Father to give Himself for us, would He not do it? "For a good man," said the apostle Paul, "some would even dare to die."—Rom. v. 7. He offered himself to be accursed for his brethren according to the flesh. (Rom. ix. 3.) An angel would change places with a fiend, if that would rescue the miserable one, and bring him happily into the realms of peace. What, then, would infinite love do for fallen man? What would it not? That Jehovah should become man's Saviour, is the natural consequence of his being Jehovah. "I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is no saviour."—Isa. XLIII. 11. "For thy Maker is thine husband, 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. "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Jehovah, art our FATHER, our REDEEMER, thy name is from everlasting."—Isa. LXIII. 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.

Let it never be forgotten, that, the Scriptures represent redemption, not only as the work of Jehovah Himself, but as undertaken and accomplished by Him, because He was Jehovah. "I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give unto another." When He appeared to Moses, He was about to deliver Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians,—the type of His deliverance of all mankind, in due time, from the spiritual bondage of the powers of darkness. He had heard their cry, and

seen their sorrows. In His love, and in His pity He was about to redeem them, and He made known to them His long forgotten name Jehovah, the name expressive of His love. Because He was Jehovah, He would deliver them from the house of bondage. Because He was Jehovah, He was to preface His laws for ever, to give a promise, and to kindle hope for the captive and the down-trodden of every age. "I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Because He is Jehovah, He will deliver you and me, and the oppressed by sin, in every age, who cry for freedom ; and though we all know Him as the Thunderer at first, we shall in time know the wonders of love which are enclosed in that name Jehovah.

SERMON VII.

THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART AND THE FIRST THREE SIGNS.

"And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt."—Exodus VII. 3.

This divine declaration, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart," will, at first sight, be felt difficult to understand by those who have a true and tender regard for God, but who may not perhaps have a sufficient knowledge of His Providence. They truly believe Him to be unchangeable and good. Now, to such I would say, however much this declaration may startle you and induce unpleasant thoughts, never suffer yourselves to swerve for a moment from the great eternal truth, that God is unutterable and unchangeable love. There are, in divine things, as there are in human philosophy, appearances which belong to the first sight, and to the imperfect knowledge of subjects, and which are rectified by more perfect observation and reflection. It seems that this solid earth on which we stand is one of the most unswerving, immovable of objects. Its hills and mountains, its valleys and plains, its rocks and buildings, all seem to be at rest; yet the fact is, that, it is in most rapid motion. It is going at the rate of thirty times the speed of a cannon-ball every hour of the day and night. The first is the appearance, the second is the reality. One who has not been made familiar with the facts of astronomy, believes that the sun rises every morning in the east, and sets every evening in the west; he will tell you that this effect has been taking place ever since he was able to observe, and that all his neighbours and friends have seen the same thing; yet the real truth is, that, the sun never stirs from his place. You see, therefore, that in these and in a thousand instances, nay, in fact in every instance that can possibly be cited, the appearance, at first sight, is something very different from the actual reality. Now it is just so with spiritual things.

In a variety of instances the Lord appears different from what He really is; but let me again urge it upon every soul within

reach of my voice, that the eternal truth is, God is infinite love, infinite wisdom, infinite goodness, and never changes. All appearance of change, results just as in the case of the errors we have named, from our imperfect observations and understanding. When we come really to know the truth, we shall have learned, that, it has for its supreme lesson, what is often brought out in the Divine Word, both in the Old and New Testaments, "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." Ps. CXLV. 9. The real truth is, as it is expressed in the 136th Psalm twenty-six times over, beginning with the first verse and passing through every succeeding verse; alike in smiting the first-born of Egypt, (v. 10.) as in bringing Israel from among them, (v. 7.) in slaying famous kings, (v. 18.) as in giving food to all flesh, (v. 25.) "His mercy endureth for ever." "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good,—for His mercy endureth for ever." How beautifully and how powerfully is this truth expressed in the lamentations of Jeremiah, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, for His compassions fail not," (III. 22.) and in the same chapter, "out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good." This is the eternal, this is the fixed and certain fact that lies at the bottom of all real sound thought in theology. St. James expresses it in other language, but with equal clearness, when he says "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—Js. I. 17. There is no mode in which God could possibly change from His nature, which is LOVE. Such change could only happen from His having a divided nature, and this could only result from one or other of these three conditions. The greater part evil, and the lesser part good; there might be a change until the evil part had overcome the good, and made the whole evil; then there would be a rest of eternal malignity, which is not conceivable. Or, the good part might be more powerful than the evil, then there would be change until the good part had overcome the evil, and then there would be everlasting persistence in good. Or, the two might be just equal; there is no other conceivable case; and if the two were just equal, two equals like two wheels of equal power, would keep one another in check. He would not then do anything at all, which also is not conceivable. So that you will perceive that this eternal truth is, in the very nature of things, absolutely so, and it cannot be otherwise: in Him there can be no variableness, nor shadow of turning. And then St. John expresses it with equal emphasis, and with equal clearness, when

he says, "He that loveth not knoweth not God ; for God is Love." iv. 8. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God ; for God is Love."—iv. 16. Consequently, this great truth,—this important lesson for all sacred thoughts, must never be forgotten, whatever appears to contradict it, this is the great truth—hold to it. Suppose anything most strange and inconceivable possible, if you like, but never suppose that the infinitely loving God can turn against His creatures, or desire to inflict mischief upon any of them. He is the fountain of peace and love, light and joy ; the unceasing Father of heaven, the source of every mercy. "I am Jehovah," He says, "I change not, therefore, O Jacob, thou art not consumed."—Mal. III. 9.

But then comes still this declaration :—"I will harden Pharaoh's heart ;" and a person may say, Pharaoh seems to have been very badly treated, that he should have been first hardened and then punished. What, then, is meant by this declaration, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart ?" Allow me to draw your attention to the fact that this hardening is mentioned in three forms of speech. The ordinary way, and that of which you will find two instances in this chapter and several in other chapters, is simply to state the fact that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. But another form is that which is given in the text, "I will harden." And notice that this, "I will harden," is simply, in the original language, the future of the verb to harden ; it does not express even so much as is expressed by our words in the future "I will harden," it has not in the least the idea of "I *will to* harden," which is frequently expressed in our use of the future tense. It is simply expressive of the fact, that the Lord's operations would be productive of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. And the third way in which the same fact is stated, is that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. You will find this expressed in the next chapter, and in other parts of the Word. In the next chapter it is in this language in the 10th verse, "But when Pharaoh heard that there was respite, he hardened his heart and hearkened not unto them ; as the Lord had said." We must not therefore consider that this hardening of Pharaoh's heart arose from any intention or direct influence of the Divine Being to harden it ; it was owing to the obduracy of the evil state in which Pharaoh was, that the operations of God's providence and mercy had that effect upon him.

Every influence proceeding from God operates not simply according to its own nature, but according to the nature of the object upon which it rests. This is illustrated by circumstances

familiar to us all. The sun, which, in outward nature, is God's highest representative, quickens the humming-bird and revives the snake, gives the lily its whiteness, and the hemlock its poison, calls forth the fragrances of the garden, and the malaria from the swamp. The same sun which softens wax, hardens clay; not because there is any difference in the influence that flows into these two, but because their natures are different. The very same beam that is beautiful to the healthy eye is most painful to the eye inflamed. The person in agony says "the sun gives me very great pain." The occasion of the sensation is the disordered organ. The very same healthy influence which causes the flower to bloom near a carcase, makes the dead body itself to swarm with loathsome life. It is in this way, therefore, that we can conceive that the divine mercy, operating upon a good soul, softens, elevates, and refines it; the very same mercy operating upon a bad man's heart, hardens it, and makes it resist, and revolt. This is the reason why Pharaoh's hardening of his own heart increased more and more as the divine mercy flowed down; not because God will'd to harden it, but because his self-will desired to rule over everything earthly, heavenly, and divine, and the more he was spared, the more he was insolent. Besides this, we may remark, that the Divine Being is the source of all life in persons, both good and evil, and therefore, in a certain universal sense, it may be said, that, all life which enables a person to do either one thing or another, flows from God. But the life that flows into a bad man, although it is that which gives him power, even to exercise his influence against God, and against goodness, was not given to him for that purpose. In his corrupt and malignant heart, he changes that life which flowed down purely to him; just as the sun's light in passing through a painted window becomes red or purple, or whatever the color of the glass may be, and thence-forward flows on in that condition. This is the universal sense in which it may be said that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, without, as we said, the least intention to do so, simply because his heart was of such a character as that God's love in him was turned into hate, rebellion, and obduracy.

But further, there is a special sense in which we may regard it as true, when it is said "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." Notice, that, the hardening took place in proportion as the pains and plagues were taken away; and this is a circumstance which always happens with the bad; spare them and they harden in pride. In the succeeding chapter, as we have before noticed, that is especially marked.

In the case of each of the plagues, you will find that the account of the hardening is at its completion, when the plague is removed. Then it was the Lord's mercy giving him another chance as it were, not pressing too hardly upon him, but chastising him and then withdrawing. Thus it is always with a thoroughly malignant soul that will not be amended. Each time that sorrow is removed it hardens itself and defies as before. It was thus the very mercy and loving kindness, which were exercised towards this poor rebellious king, that were laid hold upon to harden him. As the pain grew less, the rebellion and obstinacy grew stronger. It is in this way that the Lord says "I will harden his heart," that is "I shall harden Pharaoh's heart."

Permit me now to direct your attention to the succeeding portion of the text, where it is said, "I will multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt." Notice the word "signs," for by this expression is not merely meant that some remarkable things were going to be done, but that they were to be "signs," and a sign is something that has a meaning connected with it. A sign has a signification. Let us endeavour to discern the signification of the three remarkable things which took place as recorded in our lesson. First, there was the throwing the rod of Moses before Pharaoh, and its becoming a serpent. There was then, the passing of the rod over the waters, and their becoming blood. And thirdly, the plague of frogs. To each of these, allow me to ask you to give a brief attention. Bear in mind that the exact rendering of the sign would be that "the rod became a water-serpent." "And the magicians did so with their enchantments;" their rods were thrown down and became water-serpents. In order to see the signification of this sign, we must bear in mind, that the serpent, whether it is in the allegorical part of the Word, or in the declaration of outward fact, is always the symbol of the sensual degree of the mind in man. A marvellous mass of truths are unfolded to us in the Divine Word, and elsewhere, when we see the signification of the serpent. That animal, being the one that goes nearest to the earth, is representative of that degree of the human mind which was intended also to go nearest to the earth, that is to say, the love of the senses and sensual things.

It is a remarkable thing that in Egyptian hieroglyphics, whenever there is a door represented in any of the manifold forms in which such things occur, there is always a serpent associated with it; and this originated, we doubt not, in their knowledge, that the senses are the doors of access between the soul and the

world. When our Lord is described as the Being who would come and bruise the serpent's head, it is to teach us that He would come to put down the preponderance of selfishness and sensuality; to reduce in us that lowest degree which had become the ruling one. For selfishness, which ought to be at the bottom of the soul, has all over the world been suffered to get to the top, and to be worshipped. It has been said of savage tribes, that they all, more or less, worship the serpent at one time or other. Alas! it is equally true of civilized nations. They worship the serpent too, and if their demon serpent is not so gross, it is more subtly malignant than that which the savages of far-off nations worship. Now, it was to teach the king of Egypt this fact that the rod of Moses was placed before him; and it became a water-serpent. The Egyptians, the scientific nation with their great river, were representative of those who delight in the waters of scientific truth. The Egyptians in a state of defying God, like this Pharaoh, represent those, who, with science and learning, with fashion, with the world in all its glory, and in all its knowledge, erect pretensions against God, and claim all for their own. They fancy in lordly pride they have a right to do as they please, ungoverned by the divine commandments. Such a state of the soul is represented here by Pharaoh, and it is described very emphatically by the prophet Ezekiel, when he says, "Behold I am against thee, 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."—xxix. 3. Precisely, as everything is represented here, is it where a person has got a great river of scientific knowledge, and claims it to be his and not God's, and says "Who is the Lord that I should serve Him?" and wishes to erect himself proudly up; he is a human water-serpent, vain of his information, vain of his talents, vain of his philosophy, vain of his endowments; he is a dragon that saith "my river is my own, and I made it for myself." Now to show him this,—to be a sign of it, the rod was cast down before Pharaoh. The rod, as we have mentioned, and shewn formerly, was the symbol of the letter of the Word of God, which is a rod to the spiritual pilgrim, and was represented by the rod of Moses, a ROD of power for the Israelites as they were to be delivered by the Lord. The same letter of the Bible, when it is laid hold of, handled, perverted, and twisted by the vain self-conceit of a person who will not have God's law—of love to Him and love to man,—becomes a serpent.

A self-asserting intellect pretends to make God's Word subservient to its own evil purposes, not becoming regenerate, not

becoming good, not putting the love of God and the neighbour as they ought to be, in the ruling place in our hearts and minds ! it either invents a false religion, pretending to obtain forgiveness without inward and real change ; or it assumes infidelity and rejects all religion. Whenever either of these is done, it is turning the rod of Moses into a serpent. It is said "The magicians did the same with their enchantments."

Time will not permit* us to dwell upon the mode in which enchantments at that time, and afterwards, were made the means of the most terrible kind of communication with hell. The magicians were not mere conjurors, nor was it to put down mere conjuring that the laws were given, contained in the 15th Deu. against having communication with the dead, and against familiar spirits. The ancient nations had to be rooted out ; and it is said by the Lord in the same chapter, they were rooted out for these abominations, as ulcers upon the human race, as gangrenous masses. By diabolical magic, they opened up a communication with the hells, and thus imitated divine power, introducing the most terrible abominations into the world. It was in this way that the magicians could do these things by their enchantments. There are spiritual magicians now, there are curious jugglers, who play freaks with divine truth, and make it the very means of perpetuating sin. These are spiritual enchanters ; and when the Divine Word says to such a one as Pharaoh, see you are turning your soul into a serpent, your religion is represented here by this rod turned into a serpent. These intellectual enchanters say, Oh, yes, it is quite true, but we can only be selfish in religion. People are selfish in everything. They are selfish in business ; down goes that rod and it becomes a serpent. People are selfish in writing books ; away goes that rod and becomes a serpent. These enchanters turn all their rods into serpents. They say all things are alike. But the first and highest wrong is the perversion of religion. When religion is wrong, trade is wrong, literature is wrong, politics are wrong, education is wrong, everything goes wrong. They all become serpents together. It is this great truth which is taught by Aaron's rod swallowing up all these serpents.

The next sign was the water being turned into blood. Water is the symbol of truth ; the water of Egypt, the land of ancient science, being symbolical of scientific truth. This truth is salutary and excellent, just as truth on spiritual and eternal things is salutary and excellent for the inner matters of the soul. But where selfishness is allowed to rule instead of God, Pharaoh

becomes a great water-serpent. Then science is violated. It is full of selfishness, slain, and bloody. The trail of the serpent is over it all. This was the second sign shewn before Pharaoh. How different from that was the glorious sign which our Saviour exhibited in the very first miracle that He wrought,—the turning of the water into wine. This latter represented the transformation of cold truth into generous loving thought. That which is received merely as a matter of knowledge at first, being turned by the Saviour into loving, holy, cheering, exhilarating and delightful wisdom. Water turned into wine! What a contrast! Self, in opposition to God, turns water into blood. Obedience to the Saviour, turns water into wine.

And the third sign, that of the frogs covering everything, was a symbol of what such a character eventually becomes. The croaking of frogs is symbolical in the Divine Word, of the croaking and quibblings of false reasoning, of reasoning against God, goodness, and heaven. This croaking spirit complains that everything else is at fault but the croaker himself. Frogs of this kind are represented in the 16th chapter of the book of Revelations, where John says, "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon." And such croaking, such reasoning against truth, such murmuring and complaining against the glorious principles of righteousness, and the order of the world, come and cover the whole mind. If a man will not suffer the Lord to make him happy, he will make himself a croaking, conceited, miserable being, covering the land of his soul with frogs. You may meet with such persons now; they are not difficult to find. If people will not be made better, they become worse; and after a while, they become entirely set against the pure and simple requirements of heaven.

How astonishing is this strange perversity of the human character! How wonderful, and yet how true, that multitudes shun in every way the easy method of asking the Lord Jesus to lead them; and when they are shewn what to do, of doing it. The law of right is the simplest law that can be expressed; it is simply when we see the truth to walk in it; not stopping and hesitating, scheming, and fancying, but simply doing what the Divine Will in mercy tells us to do. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Then all the plagues and distempers of the soul will cease, and the Lord will lead us out of bondage, into the freedom of those that walk in the liberty of light and love.

SERMON VIII.

WHY THE MAGICIANS COULD NOT CREATE LICE

AND

WHY THE STINGING FLIES DID NOT REACH GOSHEN.

"Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God : and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them ; as the Lord had said."—Exodus VIII. 19.

It has been justly considered to be one of the most striking of the circumstances connected with Israel's deliverance from Egypt, that after three miracles had been performed, and the magicians had been able to imitate first one and then another of these, that there should come a plague, apparently of a less important and weighty character than the others, and that then the power of the magicians should entirely fail.

If the magicians could produce serpents, why could they not produce lice ? May we not regard it as a manifestation of the Divine Omnipotence saying, "Thus far shall you go and no farther." It intimated that it was by divine permission and mercy alone, and for gracious ends of highest good, that anything could be done by these magicians.

Providence ordains what is good, and permits what is evil when evil can be made subservient to good. When the magicians produced serpents, turned water into blood, and brought frogs, they were permitted for wise ends ; when they were not permitted, they could not produce the meanest insect.

It is a fact no doubt, affecting all things, that no evils can be permitted at any time, except by the Divine Mercy, and that whenever Omnipotence chooses to interfere, whenever Divine Wisdom sees that no good would come out of even the slightest evils, then they are not suffered to exist at all, however minute or poor they may be, even like these wretched and troublesome insects. Evil men do not think so ; when their schemes are prospering, they are elated and insolent. They imagine that God does

not observe them, or, that they are defeating His gracious laws. Like Sennacherib, one day they defy the God of heaven; like him, in the morning they awake when the divine action comes, to find their schemes shattered, their helpers prostrate, dispersed, or dead. Even the wicked are made at length to confess that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men.

But there are reasons, still deeper and broader, why the Divine Omnipotence should single this especial miracle out as one that could only be done by Himself. We shall perceive the divine wisdom in this circumstance, if we notice, first, that the dust of Egypt was representative, as well as every thing else in relation to that land, and to the divine drama then being enacted in the world. For dust is the symbol in the Word of God of things of the most worldly and material character. Objects which are of value in the sight of the Lord are represented in the Sacred Scriptures by things most valuable in themselves. Precious truths are signified by precious stones; high excellencies of celestial love are represented by gold. But things of a merely external character, although the evil set their hearts on them so thoroughly that they must have them; by honest means if they can, but by all means have them, are represented in the Divine Word as mere dust. In the 14th verse of the third chapter of Genesis, it is said concerning the serpent, the symbol of mere sensual life, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." There is no animal, either of the serpent kind or any other, which outwardly does really live on dust, but because this creature is the symbol of that selfishness which evil men deify, which evil men exalt to be the rulers of their hearts and minds, and are ever craving to feed with more wealth, more power, larger houses, greater possessions; dust shall be the serpent's meat.* How truly the craving of the wicked is represented by this eating of dust. Every one will see, if he reflect for a moment, that the hankerings of a selfish man after more material power and wealth are just as unsatisfactory to him spiritually, as dust for food would be to the yearning stomach, ever eating, but never satisfied, ever hankering after fresh enjoyments, but never filled. Animals fed on dust, would vainly try to fill themselves where there could be no satisfaction, no nourishment, no comfort derived. So is it with a wicked person, who longs after the mere grovelling things of earth, as the objects worthiest of his attention. Dust shall be the serpent's meat, and dust is the serpent's curse.

* In Central America there is a race of savages, who extract a miserable food by feeding on large quantities of a fatty kind of clay. They look loathsome and are haggard.

Well then, this dust of the land of Egypt is representative in this grand symbolic history, of a system of outward pomp and power, of busy activity and extensive knowledge, realized in innumerable productions. All appears fair and comely, until the Word of God, the rod of Aaron, waves over it. Then all its dust, all its outward life, is seen to be one great mass of little evils, signified by the dust becoming lice in the land of Egypt.

Animals are representative in the Sacred Volume of thoughts or affections of some kind or other; hence, good principles are represented by good animals with beautiful forms. On this account, we find in the second chapter of Hosea and the 18th verse, that the Lord says, "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 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." But every one will see that the Lord does not make any covenant with external animals,—with beasts, and birds, and creeping things of mere earthly life. He covenants with those who can covenant with Him, and, hence, these representations are the symbols of principles of the human mind, all full of life, when they receive life from the Lord, and are blessed by Him. They have entered into a covenant with Him. On the other hand, animals of a noxious character, large or small, are representative of principles of a noxious or dangerous class. Now, these creatures alluded to in the text, literally being insects that prey upon the skin, which deform and torture, and abuse the skin, correspond to those evils in a bad man's life which degrade him and make him despicable in the sight of others.

There are sins which are eminently injurious and oppressive, but they are not mean nor disgusting; these are lions or tigers among evils. There are others despicable, sickening, revolting in their very appearance, beggarly and filthy sins, disgusting in relation to the outward life of a man in the world, and these are represented here. Hence, when the rod of Aaron smote the dust of Egypt, and exhibited that throughout all the dust were these disgusting and loathsome creatures, it is representative of the disclosures of divine truth when they strike a system evil in itself, but of outward decency and propriety. Such a system because it is in internal opposition to the God of heaven, may seem fair, but on close inspection, and when tried by the Word of God, it is in reality covered with loathsomeness and with sins of the meanest kind. Take for instance, the condition of things

either in our own country or any other, called Christian. Hold the rod of divine truth over it, and it is notorious, that life is defiled, so as to make the true Christian blush and lament for millions, who expect to be saved by their belief, but are neither so upright nor so pure as many of the so-called heathen.

Peculation, fraud, and meanest evils are to be found on every hand. Here, in this land, in a land where the Bible is spread and read, it may be said it cannot be so, but the unhappy fact is, that, the statistics of crime of every kind are as sad to contemplate in protestant lands as in lands where the Bible is little known. There are as many crimes and petty frauds, there are as many outward evils in these lands as in those. Why do we not see it? Because there is a Pharaoh-like system of making the commands of God of none effect. Because it takes the Word of God in its hand, makes use of all the science and knowledge, which illustrates the letter of the Bible, and then perverts it to its own ends. Those who pervert and juggle in order to make some scheme of their own to be the true teaching of the Bible, instead of the simple lesson,—shun evil and do good for the love of the Lord Jesus. They who set up the belief in the Lord's death as the only requisite for heaven, instead of that victory over sin and regeneration of heart and life, which should follow faith, they are the magicians of to-day, who rule and flatter Pharaoh.

There are magicians, great in jugglery, who enchant the people, and cover them with illusions. These play with *three* and *one*, and person, and mystery, until the people are so bewildered that they know not whether there are three Gods or one God, or who is God, or what is God, and see in the merest dimness that Great and Only God our Saviour who is LOVE ITSELF. These magicians treat with like jugglery the Word and Commandments of the Most High, those Commandments which are the laws of happiness and of heaven, the delight of the true Christian, and upon which hang the law and the prophets. They commence usually by exaggerating the demands and requirements of God, and the awful punishments He will inflict if they are not complied with. When they have terrified the poor souls who listen to them, with false horrors, the phantoms of their own depraved imaginations, they then gently let the terrified minds glide into a false peace, assuring them, that if they only believe their version of the Saviour's death, though they may have broken all the Commandments a thousand times, even up to the hour of death, the Divine Wrath will be disarmed, and

they may be as sure of bliss in heaven as those faithful followers of the Saviour, who, through a life of regeneration, have been attuning their hearts and minds to His. Great magicians are these. They carry away thousands and tens of thousands at their will. They play upon those deep evils of human nature, which indispose the soul for steady combat with self and its lusts, and put off the radical change of heart and life which can alone fit the soul for heaven. These enchanters can do great wonders by their persuasive powers. They often display fiery zeal,—making fire come down from heaven in the sight of men. Rev. XIII. 13. They have unbounded confidence and assurance. The deluded people believe their zeal to be zeal for God and goodness, not for self and sect, for power and lucre, those hidden sins which lurk in the recesses of the souls of the spiritually ambitious. These command large congregations, create great excitements and successful causes, but what is the result, look around and say. These great magicians sustain a system which inevitably leads to evils of every kind, but their own evils must be of that subtle class which do not shock the vulgar. They dare not place themselves on a level with the grosser class of sinners, or their power would be broken. God reveals the lice by the rod of Aaron, but they dare not create lice.

The result is that mean evils swarm as completely over the skins of men,—over the outward life of men, as these disgusting insects swarmed over the land of Egypt. What is the testimony of the present day, if its business pursuits are examined? Who is there that can venture to say, if he goes at random into any of the different places of business, that he will get an honest article? Nay, if he happen to know that it is the practice of a trade to cheapen by deteriorating with some more gainful article to the seller, is there one man that can be sure, even, that that cheaper article is not also deteriorated, and so on five or six times deep? Why! What is this, but when the dust is examined it is covered with these outward little disgusting animals. In the sight of the Lord it is shewn, that under the reign of this Pharaoh, when explored with the rod of Aaron, as held over the dust, there appear these deflections from right, these frauds and wrongs of ten thousand kinds, usually covered up, but all swarming with these offensive creatures. But, inasmuch, as Pharaoh and his magicians represent those who are inwardly evil and outwardly religious, they will not admit that their system produces or conduces to these evils. They say the commands of God cannot be kept, and it is not needful to keep them to prepare

for heaven, that God never intended they should be kept; that He has never believed that they would be kept; that He simply laid down commands, in order that we should find out that we could not possibly keep them, and so Christ has done them for us. Yet they seek power and influence over the simply good, and that influence would be broken if they admitted that the frauds and meannesses of the day were the consequences of their system. They cannot, because they dare not produce lice. It is morally impossible. They do ultimately arrive at all such evils as are represented here by the disgusting little creatures before us; yet the power of all those who teach such a system depends upon the goodwill, depends upon the approbation of the mass of the simple-minded, and therefore it is not possible for them, nakedly and professedly, to bring out the result,—of declaring that the divine commands cannot be kept. They must not get drunk, they must not swear, they must not fight; or, externally, do the things which are plainly of a coarse, low, and vicious nature, they dare not create lice, and therefore cannot. Their whole power would be broken if they were to suffer its tendencies to be obviously seen, and the result is, that like the magicians, they cannot do this with their enchantments.

We have the same idea taught in the book of Revelations, where the system of faith alone is represented by the beast with seven heads and ten horns, and it is said, as you will read in the third verse and 13th chapter of the book of Revelations, that one of his heads is wounded even unto death, representative of the same circumstance. The system of salvation by faith alone, without keeping the divine commands, is wounded to death, when it is seen to be in utter opposition to the Word of God. But the deadly wound was healed, it is said, and it appears to be healed to those who live in a system of that kind, when it is said that although we are not saved by keeping the commands, but by believing that the Lord Jesus has done everything for us centuries ago, yet the believer will do the commands, after salvation, from the love he bears to HIM who has thus saved him. This idea serves, in the estimation of the simple-minded man, to heal the deadly wound; “and all the world (all the church)” it is said, “wondered after the beast.” The simple-minded are deceived, although it is a fact well-known that it is not true these persons do thus keep the Commandments, and when we ask them, they say they cannot. They say, the Christian does if he has the right faith simply to keep up the appearance of the connection with

the Word of God, and to save that system which is totally contrary to its whole spirit from beginning to end. "Blessed are they," and only they, "who do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter through the gates into the city."

The magicians cannot condemn themselves by their enchantments in things which the simple who are led by them condemn and abhor. Such is the lesson taught by this extraordinary part of the history of the deliverance out of Egypt.

But Pharaoh, it is said, hardened his heart again, although he acknowledged here, in this matter, the finger of God. And we are told that the Lord said unto Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he goeth to the water," and he was commanded to proclaim, that unless he would suffer the people to go forth, "swarms of flies," as it is said, "should be sent." In the Divine Word, in the original, it is, "swarms of noxious flying things,"—swarms of venomous painful flies. If we have borne in mind what we noticed in the commencement of the discourse, we shall easily perceive what is signified by the description of these flying venomous painful flies, which infested the houses and the persons of the Egyptians.

These flying things, so small and pernicious, are representative in the Word of God of thoughts which fly across the mind of bad persons, and which are continually either leading them into vain conceits, or, into vicious, biting, and destructive ideas concerning others. Our Lord describes these,—at least of the lighter class,—when He exhorts, as you will read in the 6th of Matthew, to lay up treasure in heaven, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." The moths are vain foppish thoughts, which flit about the soul of a light and frivolous individual, and eating into all that is solid, are like moths which destroy our garments. A person who is continually going from vanity to vanity, whose mind is never suffered to rest on the great duties and purposes of life, but who is perpetually dreaming of this ball, that opera room, or those frivolous games, which may be harmless as mere diversions from life's serious business, but are destructive if made life's work. They may be pursued until they make a soul one great moth. But the stinging flies which are represented here are much worse than the moths; they represent those bitter thoughts, those unpleasant stinging notices of others, which have been said to be, and largely no doubt are the sins of those who have become religiously proper, but who remain selfish in

heart. These, the rigidly righteous, are not flagrantly bad, as the openly impious are, but they are infested by swarms of stinging flies. The vices of others are brought incessantly up in their minds. They see little good in others, but fix upon their weaknesses, and even attribute evil where it does not exist. There is something bitter ever ready to sting others, which keeps up a constant irritation. Those who seek to injure others, ever injure themselves. The minds of those, who are disposed to think evil of others, are a perpetual blister; yet you will see, occasionally, persons who have been professing religion during a number of years, when others are spoken of, ready instantly with some depreciating remark, some ill-natured observation. They are great in BUTS. How common is it to hear, when some person's character has been noticed in conversation, the little word "but" come out,—the advance guard of unpleasant remarks flowing from the spirit which seeks admiration at the expense of others. They blame and sneer. Their words are described in the old English expression "backbite." Such are they whose houses are filled with stinging flies.

But, in this miracle, the Lord makes a severance between those and His people; He says "And I will sever, in that day, the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be." Divine words, which, are descriptive of the difference between those who are in mock religion and those who are in real religion. Real religion is the spirit of heavenly charity. It is beautifully described by the Apostle, when he says, "Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity is not puffed up; it envieth not; charity thinketh no evil." There are none of those stinging flies there. A person, who has a spirit of charity, attributes good to others, sees a good side, even in apparent evil, supposes things are not as bad as they look. A true Christian always thinks kindly, and kindly attributes good to all, looks for good in all, and sees it.

The true Christian rejoices in the good of all, "suffereth long and is kind, hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things." Among the Israelites, in the land of Goshen, there were no noxious flies. In the souls of true Israelites there are gentle thoughts, all-courteous sentiments; all true and general desires to promote the happiness of others, the spirit which adopts the apostolic declaration, "Now abideth these three, faith, hope, and charity, and the greatest of these is charity."

SERMON IX.

THE MURRAIN, THE BOILS, AND THE HAIL.

“Then the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.”—Exodus IX, 1.

It is easy for a thoughtful mind to see that the service of the Lord is “perfect freedom.” All that the Infinite Father and Saviour of mankind desires, is that every one of His children should be happy. He has made every faculty, both of mind and body, that it should be susceptible of receiving some excellence, some grace, some truth, some good, some glory, some beauty, and some blessing,—all calculated to elevate His creatures, and make them happy. When He, then, says reiteratedly, “Let my people go, that they may serve me,” it is but the invitation of infinite mercy, condescending in love to ask that He may have the privilege of blessing us, that He may win us from all the causes of misery and mischief, and bring us into true order for earth and for heaven. How astonishing then is it, when we find the reiteration of this divine admonition from time to time, as it is disclosed in the sacred history before us, each step in the progress, the Lord simply giving the invitation, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.” We say how sad is it, how astonishing is it that we should find Pharaoh, backed by his people, perpetually seeking to evade this holy demand, perpetually hardening himself against this invitation of the King of kings, reiterating his obstinacy and bringing fresh ruin upon his head, until the utter wreck of his kingdom is completed.

Yet this illustrious drama of the world, this amazing exhibition of infinite mercy, power, and love, was then a world-wide example. It was a representation, by the wreck of a kingdom, of what always happens in the history of every ruined soul. Then similar steps of degradation are re-enacted. By such stages, a man makes himself a fiend, and ultimately, with the same

blasphemy and horror seals his perpetual misery. We must not forget that this divine history, stirring and appalling as it is, and surrounded with such striking circumstances as were present when it was enacted on the plains of Egypt, is the instrument by which, from that time to this, the progression of good souls upwards to bliss was represented by the various stages of the Israelitish progress; and the sinking of obstinately wicked ones downward to misery was represented by the discomfiture and destruction of the Egyptians. The three plagues of this chapter are descriptive of the successive progress of the soul downwards.

The first pest, you will see, is the murrain of the beasts. The second is the plague of boils and blains, or, as it might be more correctly rendered, of ulcers and pustules;—the idea is that of loathsome, corrupt, putrid sores, and all the little infestations which surround such ulcerated parts. And thirdly, the plague of hail. We will consider these three stages of descent, which are all found in actual life, as you will discover by noticing the divine lessons and applying them to what experience discloses to a conscientious and observant mind. We shall see that such a description is as correct now spiritually, as it was correct literally, when the great lesson was first given. The laws of nature, which are those of Providence, are all wonderful; yet are they laws of order, in which love reigns, and which out of seeming discord, and strange variety, yet educe progression and lasting good. The term “murrain” is an old English word for consumption in relation to animals. We are told that it was a murrain upon the horses, the asses, and the camels, and subsequently upon the oxen and the sheep. And if we bear in mind the great doctrine, that all things in the outer world are symbols of principles in the inner world of the human soul, we shall soon see what is to be understood by the murrain of the horses, the asses, and the camels.

We may here observe in relation to the plagues with which Egypt was afflicted literally, that they were not mischiefs to which the Egyptians were altogether unaccustomed. They were rather the infestations common to the land, but awfully increased in severity. We are informed by modern residents in Egypt, that similar plagues, though less extensive, are far from unknown to the present inhabitants of that country. Paton, a recent writer, in his excellent work, “The Revolutions of Egypt,” remarks, “In 1843, the plagues of Egypt showed themselves again. The cattle-murrain of the previous year carried off 200,000 oxen.” He remarks, also, that in the same year, “The plague of locusts covered the whole land from the cataracts to the

sea-board ; so that the government, to encourage their destruction, gave the peasantry so much per oke (a measure) for their destruction. Mohammed Ali sent Abbas Pasha to enquire into this fresh source of loss and suffering, but nothing could effectually stop it ; and in many spots every ear of corn was soon eaten up."—Vol. II. 227. Even the most astonishing of all their disasters, the turning of the waters into blood, is not without some illustration at the present day. The same writer relates, "At the Birgan (near Cairo,) is a well, which, during the inundation, is of a reddish colour, and hence, the prevalence of the idea, that there exists in this quarter, a well of blood."—Vol. II. 253. There would appear to be some quality in the soil, which, when reached by the water, tinges it, and forms it into a species of mineral blood. This same circumstance produced on a grand scale would be the miracle as presented to Pharaoh. A miracle is not a contradiction to the laws of nature, but only a wonderful display of that power, which is ever active in a more limited form. A miracle is a wonder, and to a well-informed mind nature is full of wonders.

The first three animals represent man's intellectual powers, and their consumption the destruction of his intellect, spiritual, natural and scientific. The horse is a symbol of that splendid power in the understanding, which the Lord gives to every soul, by which he can make advancements on the road of spiritual truth, just as the traveller with a fine horse can make advancements on the common road. It is this representation which unlocks all those parts of the Divine Word, where you have horses spoken of as being presented to the vision of the prophets. Elisha had around him horses of fire, and chariots of fire ; and we easily perceive what is meant when we bear in mind that the horse is the symbol of the understanding of spiritual things ; and that therefore it signifies that the angels who were about the prophet, and the prophet himself had understandings glowing with love,—horses of fire. In the same way, John says, he beheld the Son of Man riding on a white horse going forth conquering, and to conquer, and the armies of heaven were following Him on white horses. These were symbols to the spiritual sight in the spirit world, where everything seen has a meaning, of the intellect of the angels, white with truth, being led by the Lord, who is Divine Truth in person, and whose glorious wisdom goes forth conquering and to conquer. "The Lord made Judah his goodly horse in the battle."—Zechariah x. 3. Every one sees that there must be a spiritual signification in that phrase. Judah, the tribe of

Judah, could only be the Lord's goodly horse spiritually. Every intellectual and thoughtful man, when he applies his understanding to Divine Truth, and seeks to progress by light from heaven, is precisely in the sight of the Lord, like a person who is riding on a gallant horse,—a knight of heaven going forth to achieve victory for truth and right. The horse represents the understanding of spiritual things.

The ass is the symbol of the understanding of natural things. Hence, when the tribe of Issachar is said to be like an ass bending under two burdens, it was to represent that quality of mind in which a person gives himself only to natural pursuits, and, as yet, feels his duties both as to goodness and truth, to be burdens to him. The camel, also a beast of burden, and as it has been called, the ship of the desert, useful especially to countries of vast sandy plains, is representative of the scientific intellect of man, his power of going over the most external matters, and making mere science subservient to nobler and more glorious truths. Now, a murrain upon these, a consumption of the horse, the ass, and the camel, is representative of that condition of the soul persisting in iniquity, when he is losing his intellectual power of understanding divine things; when he is losing even that lower power, common sense; when he is losing the perception of scientific truth itself. His soul becomes darker, and darker, and darker, on its way to idiotcy, to madness, and to spiritual death. It is the same truth which we find in other language, illustrated in many parts of the Sacred Word. The Lord Jesus says, as you will remember, in His sublime sermon on the mount, "The light of the body is the eye, but if thine eye be evil," or, as it is expressed in another gospel, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" When a person has done wrong in ignorance of the truth, when he has not been aware of his faults and errors having such serious consequences; when he has never had it brought home to him that every hour he lives on earth he is living for eternity, and he has a work to do here which must be done either for weal or for woe, either for heaven or for hell, his evils may be afflictive, but they are not eternally fatal. This is bad enough, but when he sins from malignity of heart, when his selfishness has twisted his intellect, has so consumed his sense of spiritual right and natural right, and even scientific right, that he cannot see truly what is right and what is wrong; when his horse, his ass, and his camel are all consumed, when his very eye is darkness, and he calls truth falsehood, and good evil, bitter sweet,

and sweet bitter, then how great is that darkness. It is this condition of a man that is represented by the destruction of the horse, the ass, and the camel. How different from the representation, in that divine account in the gospel, of the Lord's taking an ass and bringing it to Jerusalem. In this latter case, it represents man's common sense brought into harmony with religion, and being suffered to have the high honour of bearing upon it the King of kings. Thus, all the natural truths we have, are being blessed by spiritual truths, and we are guided on to prosperity and peace.

In the sad account before us, there is depicted the condition of one, who, in spite of every friendly help, in spite of every remonstrance of friends and of conscience, in spite of every entreaty even of the God of love, will continue to defy the glorious Being who seeks to bless him. The sheep and the oxen, which also were consumed, are representative of other spiritual virtues, the spirit of duty; the disposition to plod on in useful works, is represented in the correspondences of the animal world by the ox. The sheep signifies all the kind principles of charity. The Lord says—He will put the sheep at His right hand—and He is their Divine Shepherd. But when a person has so far immersed himself in sin and guilt, that his intellect becomes utterly depraved; the oxen and the sheep soon expire too, and he has no flock of good affections to look after.

Then the next plague comes, which I have mentioned as the plague of ulcers and pustules, called in the English version boils and blains. Now this rottenness of flesh which is represented by loathsome sores, the deep ulcerous appearances which are described by these terms, is representative of the shamelessness of evil which stands in entire contrast, you will remember, with what we pointed out as represented by former plagues. The sinner, in his early days, whose heart is heedless and rebellious, would not for the world, that any person should see him do what is not respectable. But now when he has sunk several stages lower and particularly when the intellect has lost its power, when he has come into that condition which our Lord describes, when he says,—if thou return not to thy first love I will remove thy candlestick out of its place,—(Rev. ii. 5.) when those rational powers which have been called the reins and the bridle of the soul, have been lost, then the utter indecency, blasphemy, and recklessness which prevail with him, are represented by the ulcers and pustules all about.

You will remember that striking passage, "We are full of wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores."—Is. i. 6. These

putrifying sores are the disgusting blasphemies, the utter loathsomeness of character, the carelessness of the decencies and proprieties of life which prevail, when sin has become shameless. Such is the condition represented here by the ulcers and pustules which afflicted the Egyptians after the murrain had consumed the cattle.

Moses was commanded to take handfuls of ashes of the furnace and lift them up towards heaven. The furnace represents the heart all alive with lust. "They are all adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker." The ashes are there, fixed in his habits, fixed in his maxims and principles. He has no longer the warm delight which singave at first ; but the results are fixed in his very character and they become ashes of the furnace. The ashes remain after the vigours of the lust is over, and the person has become a cool, besotted, and deliberate, evil-liver. These were lifted up by the sacred Prophet to show, how, in the sight of Heaven, such things seem. What disgusting ulcers, what awful consumption of souls, what utter rottenness of spirit, is brought about by those terrible evils which have thus made the bad man's heart into a furnace of infernal fire. You will see the same thing remarkably illustrated in what is said of those who fight against Jerusalem. "And these shall be the plagues wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem ; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth."—Zec. xiv. 12. "And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague."—Zec. xiv. 15.

Then comes the plague of the hail, the lightning, and the thunder. These signify that state of the wicked man's soul, in which he finds every truth of religion has become to him hard, condemnatory and severe. Hail, is frozen rain. Rain is representative in the Divine Word, of the descent of truth into the soul. You will remember many places in which it is thus described, "My doctrine shall distil as the dew ; as the tender showers upon the grass." "It is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you." The descent of refreshing showers, the coming down of those bright and beautiful drops which give fertility to a country, slake the land's thirst, and refresh all nature, these are just like those divine descents of holy truths from heaven, by which the soul that thirsts after righteousness feels that it is also refreshed. The

little paradise within has been visited from the heavenly world and all the trees of righteousness become pleased and happy. But where the soul has brought itself into a wintry state, when it has surrounded itself with an atmosphere of utter cold ; it has no ray of warmth from the sun of righteousness, but all is hard, miserable, and unhappy. The divine influence flowing down, becomes turned into hail. The very truths that would have otherwise cheered and comforted, become a condemnation, and are felt to be a pronouncement of punishment and despair. Oh ! I have seen some sad instances, where persons have become so utterly bad as to adopt what Milton puts into the mouth of Satan,—I cannot repent,—Everything condemns me,—It is utterly useless for me to strive :—

“ Evil be thou my good,
Where'er I go is hell,
Myself am hell.”

When I was a boy of some twelve years of age, I met a person of this character, the son of most respectable parents, in Liverpool. He had become so reckless, so defiant, so careless, such a worshipper of strong drink, that he had disabled himself in body and soul for useful pursuits, yet clinging to his sin, until even the few hours when the bar was closed at night, were hours of intolerable pain. His parents, in dying, could not trust him with the fortune which they desired, that, equally with his brothers and sisters, he should enjoy. A small sum was made over, so that he could just receive the little that might keep him with daily necessaries from week to week. A thoughtful boy, I was shocked to see so sad a wreck, and as he came down stairs, parched, burning and wretched, to see if yet the liquid fire was to be had, I took it upon me one day, to try if a boy's talk would do him any good. I spoke to him of the present hell in which he was living, and of his future ruin. He heard me, but with this fearful announcement,—It is of no use. I know I am going to hell, and I go on clutching, clutching, clutching my own misery. Religion is true, no doubt, but it is all condemnatory to me ; it is all a curse to me. I do not wish to hear of it. I cannot bear to hear of it. There is no comfort for me. It was all condemnatory, all despair, all destruction to him. It is this state that is represented by the hail coming down, and the thunder rolling over the wicked man's head. His own angry passions and lusts flashing, constitute the fire running along the ground. Such is the state represented in this divinely true and amazingly graphic description of what took place in Egypt, and of what takes place in every soul in this ruined condition.

But how wonderful is infinite love and mercy ! Pharaoh, when he was thus stricken down, and utterly helpless, after he had seen the flashes, and heard the thunder, and felt the hail, and beheld the whole kingdom smitten down, cried,—It is enough, I and my people are wicked. Let there be a cessation ; entreat the Lord for me. And Moses said,—Yes, I will entreat the Lord for you, and all this horror will cease ; but I know that thou and thy people will not repent. The condition of things had become so fixed, so enrooted, that the very powers of the intellect which alone could grasp the truth and could change him, had been destroyed by the murrain, and they were no longer available. Pharaoh had brought himself to such a state of helplessness, such an infatuated state of intellect, that it was no longer possible for him to repent. He must go down and die ; not for defect of divine mercy, Oh ! no. The Lord had taken the plagues away one after the other. In fact the plagues were not from the Lord, but from hell. The divine power simply permitted hell to effect them, and the horrors then came.

At this day ; they who fight against Jerusalem, are those who fight against right, against truth, against wisdom, and even against love ; against the Saviour God, who desires to make them happy. Oh ! what an insane contest is that. The most terrible triumph that any soul can achieve, is its triumph over God. A man can, as far as he himself is concerned, absolutely get the victory in his own soul. Because he has freedom given to him from the Lord to become an angel, he can get the victory over truth ; but it is his most terrible defeat. He can get the victory over goodness, but what a horrid triumph ! a triumph which destroys in him the possibility of happiness. Oh ! how much more noble and glorious is it for a man to take the counsel of the King of kings, to take the express, holy direct invitation of Him who is all good, to whom the whole universe is obsequious, who has given us this glorious world to make us comfortable here, and has given us a still more glorious home hereafter, if we will but let Him make us happy. How much nobler to be like Moses and Aaron, and the Israelites,—determined to quit our Egyptian state, to shun, with horror, all the ways of evil, and to enter upon that sacred freedom,—the freedom of loving God above all things, of doing right, and making ourselves and all around us happy ; making a little heaven at home in order to prepare us for a glorious Heaven in the eternal world.

SERMON X.

THE PLAGUES OF LOCUSTS—OF DARKNESS—AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FIRST-BORN.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him: And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord.”—Exodus x. 1. 2.

In considering the persistent career of Pharaoh and the downfall of himself and his people, we are conducted in the circumstances which will now engage our attention, to three more of those terrible calamities, which are recorded as having come upon this unhappy monarch and his country. He is represented obstinate as ever, sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting down to his final ruin.

The three leading particulars which are contained in the sad history are, first, the plague of the locusts, those malignant insects that are said to have destroyed every green herb, and every young tree in the land; secondly, the plague of darkness,—of that kind of thick and awful darkness which is described in the words of the text as a darkness that could be felt; and thirdly, the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, from the king that sat on the throne down to the maid-servant that sat grinding at the mill.

Allow me before adverting to the particulars, and to the spiritual divine warnings which are contained in those particulars, to remind you of the truth which we ought never to forget, that the calamities which were brought upon Egypt, were not absolutely from the Lord, as their efficient cause; but permitted by him as signs of the terrible calamities which come down upon a sinking nation and a sinking soul; but which originate in the powers of hell.

In considering this point which we are wishful to illustrate

on the present occasion, it is of importance to have a correct understanding of the circumstances connected with this great truth. Allow me to observe that all good, and only good, descends from the Father of Lights. All the afflictions which exist in the world,—in the mental world or in the physical, originate in evil as a cause, either immediately or remotely. And when we speak of evils, allow me to notice, that we may use the term for afflictions in the widest sense. Pernicious plants, destructive animals, all those things which are noxious and venomous and cause misery; all originate really in the powers of darkness.

We usually imagine that the life which flows into angels and good men, and which undoubtedly is from the Lord himself, and the life which flows into serpents, tigers, and wolves, and all hurtful embodiments of organized existence, either in the vegetable or in the animal world,—that all this life is just the same pure life from the Creator. As to its highest origin as we have mentioned, that is true. But it cannot be that the Love of the pure, holy and adorable fountain of life can directly and without change make the life of a tiger or a wolf. There must be some intermediate perversion of that life, some channel through which it descends, which alters its nature, and causes it to form in the visible world noxious plants and loathsome and destructive animals. Now, in the case before us, we have an exemplification, and to some extent, an explanation of this matter. For locusts are most destructive insects, and are described here as devouring all the green of the land, and inflicting a most terrible plague upon the Egyptians. In relation to them we have on another occasion in the Sacred Scriptures, the veil as it were drawn aside. You will find in Rev. 9th, when John was able to see the world of mind, because of his spiritual sight being opened, there is a description of what he saw, and he writes, "And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as a smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." Here we are shewn the origin of those noxious creatures, with the locusts themselves as illustrations, and an explanation of what has puzzled both philosophers and others.

What is more common than to find unexpected results in nature around us? There is enough of order to shew that the operations of nature originate in law and order, as the result of Infinite Love and Wisdom, but there is too much of aberration not to compel us to acknowledge that there are disturbing causes. The world of nature is the outbirth and the clothing of the world of spirit. The life from God flowing through heaven forms around us the myriad shapes of use and beauty which every where burst out in nature. But we must never forget that there is in the universe the world of evil—hell. That world operates upon this world also. Through evil minds the spheres of the infernal world flow into this and create innumerable forms of vicious life. No sooner had man fallen, than the earth began to produce thorns and thistles. We must never forget that vast combination for destruction which is composed of the malignant of all ages assembled in their mad and dreary world, where evil is their good, and perverted souls in myriads skilled in abominations, compose a hideous focus of mischief, burning to destroy. Did not the Lord who has the keys of hell and of death control and moderate this lowest world as well as the heavenly one, mankind would be destroyed. "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed." So much of infernal action as may be useful in temptation, and may shew the nature of evil and yet be overruled for good is permitted, just as the wrath of man is made to praise the Lord, and the remainder of wrath is restrained.—Ps. LXXVI. 10.

We sometimes meet with the observation, that all the laws of nature are quite regular in their operation, constantly producing the same exact effects, and that miracles such as described in this divine history could not have happened. Let us consider this? What is more common than plagues even in modern times, aberrations of the most extraordinary kind? Not long ago, that deadly disease, the cholera arose in India, passed on scourging nation after nation, passing from the East, on and on until coming to Western Countries it visited ourselves. Other diseases, which were formerly unknown, come with quick and rapid destruction, and in some cases are far more extensive and fatal than those plagues of Egypt. They wend their wild destructive way, exhaust their terrible power, and then cease. A little time after the cholera, came that mysterious plague the potato disease, again a plague quite different from any thing which had happened before in the vegetable world, accomplished its destructive work, year after year, setting all the learned and unlearned

at nought in their efforts to trace the cause, and how it could be removed. It worked its way, and then died out, while men were labouring to discover how it could be overcome and guarded against. And so it is constantly ; things are continually happening in this unexpected way ; and those who own no power but that of nature stand paralyzed, and can give no account of them. It is only by knowing the great fact, that this outer world is but the outer world, and that there is an inner world,—a world of mind, a world of life, a world in which heaven and its influences play around the good, and carry on all the glorious operations of creation and formation, under the hand of the great Prime Mover, the God of heaven and earth ; and at the same time, a world in which the powers of hell, the spheres of evil, are also about us, and play their part in this great and wonderful arena of divine operation. When the Divine Mercy sees that some great good, some salutary lesson, some mercy in disguise, something that will really better the human race, requires for a time a permission for hell to be suffered to operate and influence, such permission is given, and these plagues, either of one or another kind, accomplish their work, and then pass away. It is in this way that we can understand the origin of all these plagues, understand how it is that the divine love, so pure as it is, so holy as it is, so excellent and life-giving as it is in itself, when it flows through the hells, and through wicked men is perverted, and becomes formative of foul, filthy, and destructive objects.

That this was really the case in relation to these plagues of Egypt, we find stated in the clearest possible manner in the 78th Psalm, where it is said in the forty-sixth verse, after speaking of the flies and the frogs, "He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust. He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost, by sending EVIL ANGELS among them." There are angels of darkness as well as angels of light. The spheres of the powers of darkness flow forth and seek to infest the human race ; and instead of its being marvellous that these dangers and destructions should come from time to time, the marvel is, such being the overwhelming condition of evil states and evil men amongst us, that we are ever sustained in life at all. The Lord with His merciful protection surrounds us all,—the evil as well as the good ; he surrounds the imperfectly good as well as the earnestly regenerating, and it is by this protection that we are held constantly in safety. There is not a portion of the human body that would not be assailed by disease, if it were not for the pro-

protection of the Lord. There is not a herb of the field that would not perish from plague, if it were not that Infinite Mercy keeps down the spheres of hell. There is not a leaf of any tree that would not perish, and the whole earth would expire in ruin, wreck, and death. But He, who has all power in heaven and on earth, though men so little think of it, so little love Him, and so little trust Him in His divine guardianship, that Glorious Being preserves all in safety, and wonderful to think, preserves to us such an amount of health and wealth, of comfort and progress as we experience in this world of ours.

The same truth is also illustrated in the case of the destruction of the first-born. Although it is represented as coming from the Lord, yet, if you closely notice the narrative, you will see that it only came from the Lord in the same sense as that in which the other plagues came; that is, by permission.

The real destroyers were infernal spirits, and the spheres of infernal spirits. It is said, "For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the DESTROYER to come in." The destroyer,—this was the real smiter of the first-born; "and will not suffer the destroyer to come in and smite you." And the destroyer, as we are informed (Rev. ix. 11.) is the devil, that is hell. Here, then we have, as far as outward circumstances go, the explanation of the origin of these plagues, the inflictions of all mischief and misery. Well will it be for us, if we are enabled to feel a perfect faith and trust in the Lord, as the author of good, and also to be assured, that all miseries of every kind have their origin in evil, either in ourselves or in the powers of darkness.

Evils are only suffered when they take place on account of the good end which the Lord sees will be answered by them. "Before I was afflicted" says the Psalmist "I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." It is just so on a national scale. Before we were afflicted.—before that terrible scourge which I have referred to, before the cholera came we went astray in sanitary matters. How much do we yet go astray! Only by chastisements will the nations learn righteousness. People live in murky dwellings, smothered with bad air, careless of the laws of health, strength and well-being. To a great extent this remains at the present time, but we are far from being so bad as before the cholera came and taught men better. It was just so with the potato disease. Ireland, which it smote the hardest, had long

been festering in laziness, poverty, hunger, and dirt ; crowded and huddled together, satisfied if they could get their meal of potatoes, to live and crouch on in their dirt and their misery. That staff of their laziness was destroyed, and hundreds of thousands were scattered to go to other countries to learn diligence and energy, and be influenced by better teaching and manlier thought. This removal from their superstition, laziness, darkness, and misery, preparing, though thousands died, a better and a nobler lot, for millions upon millions. Even in the Lord's permissions are unutterable mercies. He acts in all He allows, as well as in all He does, only with the tenderest regard to His creatures. Out of seeming evil He produces everlasting good.

Have not the results justified the permission of the plagues we have just named ? Is not then the same Wisdom justified in the permission of the plagues of Egypt ? when the results would be so stupendous as the formation of the Israelitish nation and church, and the writing of the Word, which should be a lesson of regeneration to all mankind for ever ?

Three great stages of downfall to Egypt and of deliverance for Israel are enclosed in these remarkable signs. First, there is that of the locusts. We have already referred to the circumstance, that in the spiritual world there are appearances of locusts, which overflow from the pit of darkness. We do not mean that there are any separate animals existing in the spiritual world with natural life as locusts do in this world. But that there are appearances of locusts, because certain kinds of evil principles take and exhibit that form which corresponds to their inner nature.

Locusts destroy the grass and the tender trees of the field. Now there is spiritual grass, or there are spiritual things which are to the soul what grass is to animals. And those you will oftentimes find adverted to in the Sacred Word. The Lord Jesus says, in relation to the growth of the Gospel in the soul, it is "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." And in that beautiful Psalm, the 23rd, it is said, "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." And these green pastures on which the soul is enabled to lie down are those thoughts from the Holy Word which comfort us ; by which we feed on what is good ; which make us rely upon the divine promises, which enable us to recline and lie down in safety under the protection of our Heavenly Father and Saviour. Now, the locusts, which destroy these

green pastures, and eat up every green thing, represent the principles of malignant opposition arising from a thoroughly infidel state of heart—opposition to all the secret counsels of our Heavenly Father—eating up and removing out of the soul all joy and hope, all trust and confidence. They leave the whole soul as solitary and as barren as a desert, where no green thing is.

This plague of the locusts is representative of a far lower condition of the soul than that which we have previously met with. It first defied the Lord, and would not obey, but it kept up appearances. Step by step, it now sinks to the utter wreck of every thing heavenly, and of every thing from the Word, which would have been a comfort and strength to the soul.

The forlorn condition of Pharaoh disposed him to make some concessions. He said,—We will let the men go, but nothing else. He has been endeavouring to make some arrangements of his own all the way through. Such is the custom of a rebellious spirit. It will not do what the Lord requires. It will do something ; it offers some arrangement short of the demands of heaven. It won't do its simple duty. On the next occasion, when the plague of darkness came, Pharaoh was quite willing to let the men and the little ones go, but not the flocks and the herds. Moses said, "There shall not a hoof be left behind." Because Pharaoh is representative of that very condition of the soul which lays hold of a sort of partial religion—of something which it substitutes for that thorough submission of the heart, that entire giving up of the inmost affections of the soul which renders the whole man what true religion requires.

The second plague you will perceive is the natural consequence of the first upon which I have remarked.

For if all these sweet and gentle, and encouraging truths which are represented by the grass upon which the soul lies down, are destroyed by locusts, the necessary consequence will be the next plague—utter darkness. If religion, if the Word, if eternal things are eaten up and destroyed, and blotted out of the soul, what is there for all of us but utter darkness ? It is reducing the soul to that condition that the ancients gave as an accurate description of prejudice,—a thing without eyes, and without ears.

Lastly, there was the death of the first-born.

You are aware that it is a sublime doctrine of true religion that we must be born again. The birth of true religion in the soul is, however, twofold, first faith, then charity. The first-born

born of Pharaoh spiritually signifies the birth of such a faith as a person has, who has no obedience, and no charity. He has, perhaps, what he calls a "plan of salvation" or a "scheme of salvation." In reading some departments of theological teaching you will often find a description of the plan of salvation, the scheme of the atonement, in which it is taught that the Lord's death, which was the manifestation of His love to win us to obedience, without which there is no regeneration, nor salvation, is the SUBSTITUTE for obedience. This is a miserable human substitute for that glorious divine rule which the soul learns from the Lord, and which is epitomised by Him as love to God and love to man, perfected in obedience. Any faith which induces a man to say,—I shall be saved, because I believe such or such a creed, is a first born of the Egyptians, either of Pharaoh on his throne, or the maid-servant grinding at the mill, or the captive of the dungeons; that is, either of one who dictates such a faith, or of one who diligently seeks to support it, or of one of its most stupid followers. The faith of the gospel is a faith in the Lord Himself the living Regenerator, and His divine commandments. Our Lord never said to any of those to whom He was about to give a blessing,—What are the articles of your belief? But where a person showed his faith by his acts, and lovingly obeyed, He said—this is saving faith.

The first-born of Pharaoh is a persuasion that a person is a favorite of heaven because he belongs to the right creed. This is a sort of delusion which leads men into plagues and ruin. The time comes when the delusion serves them no longer—such a faith perishes. The first-born of Egypt dies—man has not been bettered by it. He looks back on his life, it is a mere wreck. He has gone from misery to misery, and now what is he? The first-born dies before the divine truth,—there is no spiritual life in it. There is nothing but condemnation, distress, darkness, despair.

On the contrary, the Israelites had light in their dwellings. Those who are of the class of which the Lord speaks "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile"—who have endeavoured to fight against their own passions and evils—those in the nearness of judgment have light in their dwellings. All around may be dark, but they have the light of life, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." True faith works from love. True faith embraces the Lord Jesus with the heart, trusts Him, loves Him, and lives to Him, by keeping His commandments.

SERMON XI.

THE PASSOVER.

“And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.—Exodus XII. 11.

It is one of the laws of Providence ever to forestall his creatures for good, and thus forearm them when dangers are ahead. It is hence a wise maxim never to be elated in prosperity, but rather humble and grateful; never to be cast down in adversity, but rather to feel confidence. Just as day follows night, and morning follows evening, so the afflictions of the present will be turned by infinite love and tenderness into speedy consolation, comfort, and blessing. You will see this exemplified in numberless instances, and especially in the case before us.

The Israelites had arrived nearly to the termination of their period of bondage and distress. They were now about to enter upon their journey to Canaan. They would have many dangers to pass through. They were entering upon untried paths, surrounded by a great variety of circumstances that would bring them peculiar distresses, and so they were provided by divine mercy with an initiatory feast. They were commanded to provide throughout all their homes a feast to the Lord. They were to have a joyous gathering of their families in every home, and having partaken of the Paschal Feast to be ready with staff in hand and loins girded, to encounter the trials that lay before them.

You will remember a great similarity to this, in the circumstance of our Lord's eating the Passover with His disciples immediately before He was taken from them. He accompanied it with these divine expressions, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer.” And so in the conduct of the divine mercy to us, we shall find we have never a burden, but the Lord has provided us with the means of bearing it, if we will be faithful.

It is thus that we are furnished with the soundest and truest reasons for a conscientious attendance upon divine worship, and for faithfully and obediently taking the sacrament to which the Lord invites us. For, in these acts of worship, the Lord gives us the inner comfort, help, and strength, that are seen by him to be needed for dangers upon which we have not yet entered.

Such, then, is one of the first reflections that come to the mind when we consider this divine institution appointed at that peculiar time, namely, at the close of the bondage of Egypt, and just before the commencement of the march towards Canaan. The whole of the circumstances are full of interest, and full of edification.

Before passing, however, to the consideration of all that is implied in the arrangements of this divine institution, allow me to notice an objection that has been urged in comparatively recent times against the reality of this remarkable occurrence. It proceeds from the Bishop of Natal. He says "that at the time the Lord gave the command there was but one day for its being executed," for it is written in the 12th verse, "I will pass through the land of Egypt *this night* and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will exact judgment." And then it is written in the 36th verse, "And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And it came to pass at the end of 430 years, even the *self same day*, it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Now, the objection runs thus: here were about two millions of people in the capital of Egypt and the surrounding country. They must have covered a very considerable district, and how, (the objector asks,) could this command of the Lord, that they should all get lambs, and have them sacrificed and eaten, be carried out in one day? It does seem a rather difficult undertaking. But it is not a little difficult to understand how a grave and thoughtful reader could have made such a mistake as this objection implies. Notice the beginning of the chapter. You will read in the 3rd verse. "Speak ye to all the congregation of Israel, saying, in the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the houses of their fathers, a lamb for a house." Now, here the command is given on the very first day of the month ordering what they should do on the tenth day of the month—nine days after. And further, this lamb was to be

kept until the fourteenth day of the month, "And the whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it in the evening." And when we read of this *self same day*, it is not the self same day in which the command is given, but the self same day in which the lamb was to be sacrificed, that is to say, they had fourteen days notice. The objection involves an extraordinary oversight.

When, too, we bear in mind that one of the peculiarities of the Israelitish mind is that it is more splendidly endowed with organising power, probably, than that of any other nation, there will then be seen to be no serious difficulty in their making all the different arrangements that were necessary to be made in fourteen days. If there was aught that was not provided for in the particulars laid down in the command, the Jews had so especial a power for organisation and arrangement, that what would have been difficult to others, would have been easy to them.

On this occasion you will find, that as soon as Moses himself received the command, he called all the Elders of Israel together. There was no crowding or giving the regulations out to the whole mass. They had their divisions of families, sections and tribes; they had their heads of families, their elders and chiefs. These were all called together, the divine will was given to them, and they instantly went about their work and got everything ready for carrying out the operations.

But, supposing this not to be the true account of the origin of the Passover amongst the Jews, what was its origin? How came it to exist? It does now exist—how did it begin? Every effect must have a sufficient cause. They have kept the Passover as far as all history gives us to understand, from its origin down to the present day. Every year as the time has come round, notwithstanding the growth of Christianity, and although the most powerful efforts have been made through dark and persecuting ages to compel the people to discontinue that which had been commanded to their fathers, they have in spite of fire and faggot, persecution, dungeon, torture and death, kept this festival, which they considered a divine regulation down to the present moment. And would it not be irrational to suppose that they who have been so scrupulously particular, so careful as to what they believed was a divine regulation, had somehow or other got hold of it at first in such a negligent and foolish way that there was no true ground for belief in it whatever? This is far more difficult to conceive than any of the objections that have been brought against it can

make the actual occurrence itself. Nay, further, there is no instance in all history, in the records of any nation, of a persistent public memorial being maintained constantly from year to year through successive ages, that had not a real historical base for it. There must have been something from which it had its origin, and something real and sufficient as a basis for it to rest upon.

It would be just as easy to suppose, that should some one get up in London and tell us that we were to have a feast because we had all been taken across the River Thames without the slightest danger, and without even so much as wetting our feet, the whole population would be induced to accept and act upon its suggestion. When a person can bring an instance of a nation thus led away to believe, and to commemorate as a great fact what was only a vague lie of some impostor, then there will be some reason in the objection that the Israelitish nation have been thus taken in and deceived.

But there is much less likelihood of this with them than there would be with us. They were the most literal, the most exact, and most peculiarly scrupulous of nations, in all things belonging to their religion.

We have been particular in dwelling upon this matter as part of the sacred history and as most important, because although there is a spiritual sense in it, and in every particular a divinely beautiful and important lesson, let us never forget that it is based upon the letter of the Word being divinely true. We must not deny the body of the Word to get at the soul. Just as in the case of every individual man he has a soul as well as a body, and a body as well as a soul, so in the divine Word there is the body of its *letter*, upon which, and within which rests the sacred soul of its spiritual signification.

Let us now ask what the spiritual signification is, which is couched in the remarkable and interesting particulars connected with the Passover.

Its highest signification is the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, or entire consecration of His Humanity. As the apostle Paul says :—" Christ our PASSOVER is sacrificed for us." But its signification, even in relation to Him, is not simply that He died upon the cross, for that would take in very few indeed of the particulars which are given here.

It is quite true that the Lord was the Lamb of God, and that the Paschal Lamb was the type of which He was the greatest antitype ; but not simply in the circumstance that he was put

to death. He was the Lamb of God before that, and in a higher sense than that. He was the Lamb of God in this sense—that the divine innocence of God himself, that which forms the soul and spring of all spiritual innocence in any one of us—this Divine Innocence existed in the Lord's Humanity. "Behold the Lamb of God" said John the Baptist three years and a half before His suffering on the cross—"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." Men ask that punishment should be taken away; God takes away SIN, and so takes away sorrow. Frequently one hears persons who think of the Lord's death upon the cross being everything, and His life and His spirit scarcely anything, express themselves as if they thought the Divine Words were "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the wrath of another God"—that is, the wrath of the FATHER. But the passage does not say so. It says something far different and far higher. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." That is to say, the lamb-like spirit of the Lord, when it descends into the heart of His disciples, takes away anger, envy, the disposition to revenge and resentment, and makes the heart itself, a new heart of holy innocence and heavenly goodness. Take away the sins of the world and punishment dies of itself. Now it was in this sense, that the Lord's humanity, was fully sanctified, consecrated, offered up by Himself in His life, and in His death—every infirmity which He had taken from the virgin mother being gradually subdued and removed—and became the perfect body of the Divine Love. In the evening of each state, the infirm earthly life was slain; in the morning of a new state, divine goodness took its place and so He was made "perfect" through suffering.—Heb. ii. 10. v. 8. 9. "For our sakes He sanctified Himself that we might be sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19. It is this that made Him that grand object which every part of the Passover typified and represented. Thus He became the spotless Lamb of God, and His spirit flows forth to make all His people "lamb."—Luke x. 3.

The Lord's death upon the cross, sacred and important as it was in its consequences, was only one link in a chain. It taught us that He who had died for us, would do everything for us that could be needed for our regeneration. You will perceive by a number of particulars here, which could have no relation to the mere outward death upon the cross, that His death was not *all* that was implied in the sacrifice of the Passover.

The lamb, or the kid (it was to be either a lamb or a kid

according to the convenience and the means of the householder) was not to be crucified. If the sacrifice had consisted in the natural death of the lamb, to represent the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, then it ought to have been crucified in order to make the representation exact; but it was not so. Again, it is said that this lamb was to be roasted with fire. There was nothing in the Lord's literal death of which that could be representative. The Paschal lamb was also to be eaten afterwards; there was no literal counterpart of this in the death of the Lord. Thus there were numerous particulars not represented by anything that took place in the Lord's death, viewed only as an outward fact.

Now let us regard the spiritual sense, and every one of these particulars will appear to us beautifully significant. Permit me now to invite your attention to them seriatim.

The first particular, to which I would draw your attention, is that this lamb or kid which was to be selected by the household according to the number of souls, one for a household, ought not to be considered as at all suggestive of one who is to be *punished*. The idea of many who suppose that the meaning of the words "sacrificed for us" is that the Lord was punished for us is simply a desecration of the original idea of sacrifice. The real meaning of the word sacrifice, as the word itself implies, is to *make sacred*. It is made up of two words—"sacer" and "fio"—"I make sacred." Sacrifices in ancient times, and sacrifices in their real idea, mean dedication, and not destruction—consecration to the will of the Lord, not punishment. And, hence, we read, in that beautiful verse of the 51st Psalm, which speaks of true sacrifice, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." In the same way St. Paul says, in the Epistle to the Romans,— "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."—Ch. xii. 1. Again, "but 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."—Phill. iv. 18. Sacrifice means dedication to the Lord—offering up the things sacrificed to do His will. And, in the symbolical ritual of the Jews, all the different animals which were offered up, represented all the different feelings of the heart and mind, that should be consecrated and dedicated to the Divine Being that they may be blessed by Him. The Lord's Humanity was entirely and

supremely offered up and became filled with the Divine Love,—a whole burnt offering: man must offer up every affection and thought in his degree following his Saviour, and thus become a sweet sacrifice to the Lord.

The next feature of the Passover to which I would call your attention is the use of the blood of the lamb, or of the kid. It was to be received into a basin and then marked over the lintel and the two door-posts of each house; and then, it is said, the destroyer could not possibly enter in. Now, blood, which is a liquid element, and next in importance to flesh, in the body human or animal, is representative of the living truth which is of next importance to holy goodness when it is received into the soul, and flows through it and nourishes it. Hence, our Lord says, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."—John vi. 54. It is not outward blood which is to be drunk, any more than it is outward flesh which is to be eaten.

I have been sometimes struck with the fact, that amongst the large number of preachers, who insist that everything in religion consists in believing that the literal blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the people, few speak of eating His flesh: yet we are to eat the Lord's flesh, as well as drink His blood. I must confess to never having heard a single one of that class of preachers refer to eating the Lord's flesh. They never had apparently the least suspicion that anything more was to be done than to attend to the blood,—and that the literal blood. With them it is believe, believe, believe, that the Lord shed His blood for you. That is the whole essence of religion. If you do this, you are sure to be saved.

The Word says we must drink His blood, and thus receive it into us, because the blood of Christ means the loving influence of His wisdom flowing from the Lord Jesus. It must enter into our minds, permeate our lives, fill us with new thoughts, impart to us all that is holy, good, wise, and pure, and form in us a new nature.

The Israelites put the blood upon the lintel, and the door-posts. The house represents the mind, the lintel and door-posts represent the communication of the mind with the world. There are two doors in each man's soul, an inner door, which is intended to communicate with heaven, and of which the Saviour says, "Behold, 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."

There is another door, a door of communication with the world—the senses—the eyes, the ears, and all those different perceptive faculties by means of which the world enters in. Taken together they may be regarded as the outer door of our spiritual house. In a state like that which is represented here by Egypt all that the world gives is evil and false ; but by guarding the door-posts and the lintel with the blood of the Paschal Lamb, you so fortify yourself by divine wisdom that no destroyer,—no destroying evil, can enter in. You are ready to resist every fallacy, and every falsehood. You keep the door of the soul guarded and closed.

It is said further, “Ye shall eat (the lamb or kid) roasted with fire, and with bitter herbs shall ye eat it.”

The lamb of heavenly innocence, imparted from the Lamb of God into the soul is to be accepted with the fire of holy affection—roasted with fire—that is to say, received with fervent love. You will pass over from all the impieties of evil, into all the sincerities and virtues of goodness and truth.

But the Israelites had also “to eat the Passover with bitter herbs.”

When we are resolved to commence our march towards the heavenly kingdom, we must not suppose that it will be a perfectly easy work. We must not forget that there is yet very much in our natural inclinations that crosses heaven, and therefore heaven must cross our natural inclinations. Those faults that are hard for us to forsake must really be given up. These are the things which require divine truths for their correction, which, like bitter herbs, are salutary but not pleasant. Who is there that has commenced to walk towards the kingdom of heaven, and has not felt many truths like bitter herbs? Yet, we must say, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Lastly. With your loins girded—that is, with your purposes fully determined ;—with shoes on your feet, that is, prepared with the truths of daily life ; with your staff in your hand, that is, the promises of the letter of the Divine Word sustaining you ; Eat it in haste, receive the saving good into your hearts without delay or hesitation. Then, go forth children of heaven. Take the freedom your Saviour God has wrought for you. Commence the march of the christian life, which, through the chequered states of time, shall issue in the peace and bliss of heaven.

SERMON XII.

THE LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY.

"And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month."—Exodus XIII. 5.

The chapters which contain the divine history of the Israelitish attainment of freedom are mainly revelations of the obstinacy of Pharaoh and of his self-willed kingdom. We cannot read the story of their sorrows without feeling how sad it is that there can be such a stiff-necked condition of the human race, that it should need stroke upon stroke to prevent that defeat the divine purposes, which the self-will of man is disposed to effect. It is only by blow upon blow that liberty is won for a nation, or liberty is won for a soul.

But in the passage before us, and ever and anon in the sacred history, the divine page is illuminated, somewhat, by presenting to us the glorious end that is to be accomplished; re-calling attention to the fact that all these operations of divine mercy are to bring the Lord's people, all who will follow His leadership and do His will, into a state of blessing such as was prefigured by the Canaan of the Israelites,—a beautiful land flowing with milk and honey. Thus the divine mercy from time to time reminds the Israelites and encourages them, and especially in the chapter before us. It is declared in our text, that "When the Lord would bring them into the land of the Canaanites, a land flowing with milk and honey," they should perform a service to the Lord which should be itself a feast. Not only that they should have the delights of the country, but that even the worship of the Lord should be itself a feast of the highest

kind. "Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord."—v. 6.

It is precisely the same with us in our regeneration. We sometimes lament that we seem to make so little progress in our way towards becoming what we ought to be, so little to realize that truly christian state of heart in which we love the Lord above all things ; that enlightened state of mind in which we approve whatever is true, and good, and holy ; and that condition of life in which we have perfect peace.

Our changes are incessant. If we have a state of comfort and blessedness to-day, it is followed by one of care and sadness to-morrow ; and so our life goes on. But when we are in a state in which discouragement and distress are getting too much for the general tone of our character it is well that we should listen to the divine promises, and should comfort ourselves with the assurance that all these things are intended to bring us into the land whither we go to possess it—a land flowing with the celestial milk of heavenly wisdom, and celestial delight,—the honey of heaven.

In considering the application of the text to the Israelites, their Canaan, and their changes, we shall be able to see by analogy its still further application to our condition, to our Canaan, and to our changes.

One of the first decided marks of difference between the country the Israelites were then quitting, and the land to which they were going was, that Egypt was flat, tame, and monotonous, while Canaan was a land beautified by hills, and diversified by lovely valleys. This is very expressively brought before us in many parts of the Sacred Scriptures, but in none more than in the 11th chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, where it is said, "For the land, whither thou goest to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs : but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven : A land which the Lord thy God careth for ; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."—v. 10, 11, 12. This delightful description is one that every traveller in these countries realizes. Egypt is remarkably rich, but also remarkably flat and monotonous. It is, in fact, the deposit of the slime of the river Nile, which descending from far off lands under the equator, brings down constantly a rich soil ; this becomes an alluvial

deposit in the low parts of the country, and has really made Egypt. It is a plain or wide valley, warm, rich, fertile and flat. It has in all ages been considered a kind of granary, at least to the lands bordering on the Mediterranean; but to the eye it soon becomes uninteresting and uninviting, being quite destitute of those elevating tendencies which lofty and grand scenery ever inspires.

Egypt is the symbol of the world. A soul taken up with worldly pleasures, worldly knowledge, worldly possessions, and not governed by religious thought and love, is a soul in Egypt, flat and low. Such a soul has no high hopes and principles. It is a state mentally watered by the foot.

It is a remarkable and most interesting and suggestive fact, that although men ordinarily care so much for the possession of this world's wealth, beauty, and dignity, that yet the symbol which the Sacred Scriptures give for this condition of mind is the foot. "If thy foot offend thee," the Lord says, "cut it off." "My feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." But it is this part of man—the worldly part, which is represented by Egypt. And, when there is nothing else but the world, we are compelled to say with Hamlet, "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world." Such is the land of Egypt, the land watered by *the foot*.

The land whither we go to possess it, however, that glorious state of things of which Canaan is the symbol—is a land of hills and valleys, which drinketh water of the rain of heaven.

We can have only a faint conception of the delightful feelings such a promise must have awakened in the hearts of the Israelitish people.

Long had they been toiling as slaves in a wearisome land. Ever the same dull country, the same dull round of mean employments, the same river, the same wide spread fields, the same gardens of herbs, the same dull occupation of turning the irrigating wheels with their feet.

But now they were told of a land of hills and valleys. Beyond the desert there awaited them those grand mountains, which, when glowing in the morning sunlight would seem the very gates of Paradise; the mountains of the south, the mountains which are around Jerusalem, as the Lord is around His people; mount Hermon with its sides clothed with fertility, representing all the climates of the earth; mount Carmel looking grandly over the sea, and having at its foot the plain of Esdraelon blooming with the roses of Sharon; the terraced hills covered with vines, and

clustering with grapes; the valleys teeming with plenty, their sweet nooks lighted up with lilies;—these in their varied beauty and plenty would all be theirs. Well might they start in haste, and go forth exulting. Behind them, weariness, slavery, and death; before them, liberty, grandeur, prosperity, and peace.

And their states resembled ours.

Tired and vexed with the emptiness of earth, if there has been nothing but earth, does not the soul rejoice when the grand visions which lift it to God open upon its view? It is as mountains soaring to heaven, when the affections of the heart seek communion with the Highest. When we adore and yearn, when our hearts exult and go forth to grand and noble objects, when we feel as angels feel, and think as angels think, then have we some idea of the land whither we go to possess it.

The mountains represent the affections of love to the Lord, the hills those of love to our neighbour.

The valleys represent the uses of life, the humbler duties amongst which we walk. The rain of heaven is the descent of refreshing truth into the soul. "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

The combination represents the state of a person who goes up in devotion, love, and reverence to the Lord, and then comes down to practise the virtues which have been opened to him while he has been adoring his Divine Saviour. He goes in and out, and finds pasture, as the Lord said, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall go in and out and find pasture." His state is a land of hills and valleys, a land of noble sentiments, a land of sublime pleasures, a land of glorious principles, a land in which man feels that he is an immortal being, a God-like image of the Eternal One, and that his true life is to do God's glorious will. This is the land whither we go to possess it, the state of soul into which we as Christians come when we have burst asunder our Egyptian bonds and overcome our internal enemies.

• But at first, and by nature, the interior of the soul is possessed by spiritual enemies which are here represented by the different foes classified under five names:—the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. The promise was, that when these had been driven out, then the Israelites should possess and enjoy this glorious country. These five classes of enemies, actually possessed and polluted the land of Canaan.

The Canaanites were a dusky race, the Lowlanders of the country, and dwellers on the seaside; known to classical

historians as Phœnicians. The Amorites were the Highlanders, allied to the old gigantic race, and dwelt chiefly on the mountains of the east. Both these were fierce and warlike. The Hittites were the more peaceful occupants of the plains of the south, fond of trade and commerce with other nations, and it was by their name that in the early ages Palestine was known to foreign countries. They were all idolators of Baal, Astarte and Moloch; given to cruel debasing and nameless sins of the most revolting character, with this additional enormity, happily almost unknown to later times, that they confirmed themselves in their evils by magic arts, consultations with familiar spirits, and communications with the hells.—See Lev. xviii. 21-30. They had by these crimes fallen into such polluting abomination, such foul, loathsome, and detestable wickednesses, that no reformation was possible. Hence they needed to be exterminated for the good of mankind. They were like incurable ulcers in the great body of humanity, and to save the race these must be cut off.

The Israelites were the executioners of Providence. They were inwardly evil and fierce. They went zealously to destroy when they were permitted. They were restrained at other times. But when the good of the human race required the extirpation of a tribe too vile to be continued, and too corrupt to be reformed, they were permitted to do the work of destruction, and the permission looks like a command.

The abominable king who was the chief over the Canaanites at the time when Joshua led the army of the Israelites across the Jordan, was that king Adonibezek, who is said to have held seventy kings his captives, cut off their thumbs and great toes, and caused them to lie under his table to starve upon crumbs.

The Amorites are the lusts of the heart; the Hittites the more smooth and managing enemies of self-derived intelligence, which are not violent, but strengthen the others by false persuasions; the Canaanites evils in general. These three oppose us in our spiritual journey; Adonibezek—determined to oppose everything of a religious character, and to insult and domineer. This open defiance of right is the central Canaanitish king. In the last verse of the prophecy of Zechariah you will find when a state of things is described of universal love to the Lord, it is said, "And there shall no more be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts," meaning that there shall be no more spiritual opposers of the Lord, for the literal Canaanite had for centuries been extirpated. These people were as precious as others in the eyes of the King of Heaven, who regards none with

dislike, for he is no respecter of persons. But it was because of their evil character, in the first place, and their symbolical character in the second, that they had to be driven out.

“He smote great kings ; for His mercy endureth for ever. And slew famous kings : for His mercy endureth for ever.” Sihon king of the Amorites : for His mercy endureth for ever. And Og the king of Bashan : for His mercy endureth for ever.” The Lord desires the salvation of the whole of the principles of the human soul, yet man cannot be saved unless he expel selfishness, and root out falsehood, unless he cease from doing evil and learn to do well. He must spiritually extirpate the Canaanite, the Hittite, and the Amorite.

The other two, the Hivite and the Jebusite are representative of what also exists in man in the evil state. The Hivites were a very peculiar people. They were internally bad, but they were anxious by deceit to make a league with the Israelites. You will remember a very curious history in the 9th chapter of Joshua, where it is said the men of Gibeon united themselves together and said, let us send ambassadors to Israel. They pretended to have come from a very far country, with mouldy bread and old wine bottles, and they made it appear to the Israelites that they were a very peaceable and harmless people who wished to live without strife. They made a covenant with the Israelites, and continued for a long time to live amongst them : they were made hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation. They are not true of heart, but they submit.

The Jebusites continued for a longer period. They remained in possession of some important portions of the country, and the great fortified place of Jebus to the time of David. You will find an account of these people and of the last transaction in connection with them in the second book of Samuel, where it is said David was insulted and defied by the Jebusites who placed upon their strong walls, blind men and lame men, and dared David to come and take them away.

The Jebusites and the Hivites as we have described them represent in the spiritual sense, those habits and dispositions which often exist in such as are really bad, but appear outwardly moral and useful, and outwardly worship the Lord. These are they who come and say “we are quite willing to submit ; we will conform.” But there is no real heart, soul, and purpose with them of becoming regenerate. The spiritual Hivites and Jebusites learn something about religion, talk about it, write about it, and will do anything about it, except really live it. If you

can only pass through the walls you will find lame things and blind things, inside. For blind and lame are the obstinately bad who make no efforts to live for heaven, who have all the trouble of trying to appear religious, and even all the appearance of persons who are learned about religion, and who can write about it, and talk about it; but who have not the enjoyment of its true possession or even the enjoyments of vice. These have not the sense to be truly good, any more than the recklessness to be truly bad. These lukewarm beings are about the blindest and lamest of any. They are the spiritual Jebusites. They are not true countrymen of Israel, yet they are always there. All persons who have unregenerate hearts have more or less of this character. They endeavour to serve God and mammon.

They try the lukewarm condition of being neither cold nor hot, and cannot make up their minds either to give up heaven or to give up evil. These are they who are represented by the Hivites and the Jebusites. We must truly face all these classes of sin. If we examine ourselves we shall find that we have our Canaanite and Hittite and Amorite, the known evils of self-love, false idea, and outward vice, to fight against, and drive out. We have also appearances of goodness,—mere habits, and the appearances of truth, all those semblances that have no life or heart in them, all these are to be given up. The prophet says, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." Woe to those who have the appearances of goodness and truth without the noble reality! Blessed are they who fight the good faith! They shall come into the heaven of the Lord, the land flowing with milk and honey; or in other words flowing with truth and goodness. Milk is the symbol in the divine Word of that heavenly truth which feeds the soul, as the apostle Peter so beautifully expresses it, "I have fed you with the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby," and the same sort of milk is meant by the prophet when he says, "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." The land, the heavenly state that we acquire, flows with milk—flows with all that celestial truth and wisdom, which gives the mind a meat to eat, of which the world knows nothing. Honey means the delight of truth, the sweet

pleasure of putting good thoughts into practice. Those thoughts are like the honey bees who go about and do their work ; and there is such a heavenly satisfaction, such a delightful state of feeling in every act of religion which flows from those heavenly thoughts, that it is the sweet honey of the kingdom of heaven. This idea is very beautifully expressed in the Psalm LXXXI. 16, where the Lord speaks of the delay in becoming regenerate, because of our being so half-hearted in our religious career. "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ; then would I soon have subdued thine enemies. I would have fed thee with the finest of the wheat ; and with honey out of the rock would I have satisfied thee." And is it not so ? Do we not when we genuinely endeavour to serve the Lord in the acts of our daily life, when we read the Word thoughtfully, and especially when we endeavour to bring it into practice—do we not find that it is to us so charming in its sweetness, so delightful in the heartfelt joy which it inspires, that we can say as the Psalmist said, "Thy Word is dearer to me than honey ; yea, than the droppings of the honey-comb." It is this then that the land of Canaan signifies to us. This state is one of perpetual enjoyment, in proportion as we have faithfully fought against, and never shrunk from the antagonism of our sins. Our daily career is then a daily endeavour to introduce ourselves into a life of loving usefulness to man and devotion to God—thus preparing ourselves, whether we are taken earlier or later from this world, to go to that heaven where love and wisdom, peace and joy, fill the land—the eternal Land of Promise.

SERMON XIII.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

"And Moses said unto the people, fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show 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."—Exodus xiv, 13, 14.

The passage of the Red Sea was an event of incalculable importance both to Israel and to mankind. To Israel it was the passage from Africa to Asia, from the civilization of one great portion of the earth to that of another, an event always solemnizing to the thoughtful. It was the passage also from bondage to freedom, from terror to triumph, from fear to faith. That night the first national emancipation took place. For mankind this lesson was sanctified for ever. The deliverance of Israel was the sublime type of the redemption of the world from hell. Israel's God was the Redeemer in both cases. Help was not in man. Deliverance was from the Lord alone. We are ever redeemed by the Eternal. "Thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called."—Isa. liv. 5. But when we are redeemed we must walk, using our powers by divine direction all the days of our life. This is ever true equally of individuals and of nations.

Another reflection presses itself upon us. This deliverance of Israel was not one act, but a series. For months fainting Israel was cheered, and Pharaoh was warned. By reiterated blows, the malignant power that held Israel in bondage was subdued.

We have seen Pharaoh and his people hardening themselves against renewed warnings, and determining to continue holding their victims if possible. Brought through a succession of sinnings and of sorrows, to that point, at which they felt that there was no possibility of keeping their dominion longer, they yielded at last. We considered in our last discourse, the

preparations of the Israelites for quitting their condition of peril and of pain. The clutch of the tyrant was at length broken. The rescued slaves had commenced their march. Let us watch their progress further. The first day they proceeded to a spot called in the Egyptian language by a word that signifies "the tents," about sixteen miles from the chief city from which they had started. In the Hebrew language it is called, as we are told in the chapter immediately going before, Succoth, a word expressive of the same meaning—"the tents," and subsequently in the Greek language Scœne, which is also a translation of the same word. The second day they passed on, twenty-two miles, to Etham, on the edge of the Wilderness, and after staying the night there, again commenced their march, and they got to the Red Sea, now called the Gulf of Suez, where they encamped again. Between a place called Migdol or "the tower," (a sort of fortified spot, of which, it is believed, some remains exist down to the present day), on the one side, with Baal-zephon, or the Sanctuary of Typhon near; and a place called Hahiroth, or Pi-hahiroth, that is, "the pastures" on the other, they rested.

A valley in the neighbourhood of this arm of the sea led to the coast, so that the people when they had descended this valley had reached the sea-side, having gone slightly towards the north, or towards the head of the gulf. They were then told that they must turn southwards, and go down away from the part where alone there could be a passage by land. Before them was the arm of the sea. They were not to go up, or north, because that would have taken them towards the land of the Philistines, really a part of the country of Canaan, and not more than 200 miles distant. But this would have brought them to a land possessed by an exceedingly warlike people. The Israelites just escaping from bondage, half armed, with an immense number of hangers on, and of women, and children, were in but poor condition for facing the ferocity of the warlike tribes of the Philistines; therefore, they were not to go that way, although it was near.

But they were to go down again towards the south, where there is a spacious plain between the hills and the sea, closed up however at last by the mountain Jebel Attaka, which adjoins the water, and bars the passage to an army. The sea here is seven miles across.

In the meantime the Egyptians had gathered courage. Pharaoh had again determined that these rescued captives should not get away. As we have said, their position was such, that only one valley led towards the spot where they were. They were not to go up to the north. High lands, difficult for so vast a multitude to traverse, lay between them and the

country they had left, on the south. They had hardly settled after the day's journey when they heard the sound of the Egyptian army, and saw over the ridges the well-known horses, and the dreaded chariots of war. The hearts of the people sunk with terror as the sound of the pursuers drew near. There seemed no escape now. Just one way out, and that possessed by the descending army of the Egyptians. One direction too difficult for them to traverse, and the other road forbidden. Here was just the crisis of their fate. As the sound of pursuit increases, women and children cringe together. At the cry, They come! they come! every heart pants with terror. There seemed to be no possible avenue of escape. The sea in front, the mountains and the enemy behind. Then it was that the divine comfort came in the words of our text, "Moses said unto the people, fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of God."

This expression "stand still" is not exactly a full rendering of the original language. The meaning is, "stand in order, and be still." It does not convey the idea of helplessness and utter rest as opposed to activity, but of orderly arrangement. One of the peculiar characteristics of the Jewish mind, was a tendency to organisation. They never suffered themselves to be in a crowded, promiscuous condition. Each tribe was under its proper chief and leaders, and marched in its proper order, and rested in its proper order; so that this command was rather "See that you are all in order, and then stand; be confident in the Lord; fear not." "Stand in order and ye shall see the salvation of Lord, which he will show 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."

The sun went down, the eventful night set in. In the morning when the sun arose again, they were safe and grateful on the coast of Arabia, the Egyptians would trouble no one more. There was a strong east wind, we are told, which opened up a path in this shallow sea; so that the Israelites found that the waters were dispersed right and left, and their whole army marched across to the utter astonishment of their enemies, and yet by the aid of means that are not difficult to understand.

When exceedingly high winds prevail even at the present time, portions of the sea which are of considerable depth, are occasionally rendered comparatively shallow, and when the tendency of the wind is favourable, the tides that are low at one time, produce a sea of considerable depth. We have had an instance very recently indeed, of what is called a cyclone or exceedingly powerful whirlwind, occurring on the river Hoogly, and resulting

as we are informed, in the papers, in the loss of 60,000 lives, through this powerful hurricane, raising the waters above their usual level, and overwhelming the shallow lands of that river. When the Zuyder Zee was formed, high winds and high seas combined, and a portion of the Netherlands was attacked. There was a sweeping of the waves over the land, overwhelming no fewer than 100,000 individuals. It is in this way that we may understand how the Divine Providence for the purposes of deliverance in that day, and to represent the grand history of the soul's deliverance in all time, provided that there should be, first of all this opening for the Israelites to pass through safely, and that when their eager and tyrannical foes, rushed forward again to seize and hold them as slaves for ever, they found the waters roll back over them, and as it is said in the latter part of this chapter, not one of them was left to tell the story. Such is the divine history that is involved in the words of our text.

Faith will find in it encouragement and hope. The winds and the waves are servants of the Most High. "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."—Psalm xc. 4.

The wondrous deliverance in the Red Sea, left its impression on the Israelitish character and records through all their history. Though an inland people, you find in psalms and in prophecies through more than a thousand years, ever recurring references to this wonderful display of divine power and mercy. "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee O Lord among the mighty, who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus xv. 10, 11.) "The waters saw thee O God, the waters saw thee: they were afraid, the depths also were troubled. The clouds also poured out water; the skies sent out a sound, thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven, the lightnings lightened the world, the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea; and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."—Psalm lxxvii. 16, 20.

"Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm dividing the water before them to make himself an everlasting name?" Isaiah lxiii. 11, 12.

Among the Egyptian monuments there is no tomb of Pharaoh Thothmes IV., whom we have many reasons to conclude was

the king who pursued Israel, while the kings preceding and following, have each their richly carved tombs covered with hieroglyphics. The Red Sea was his tomb. Amenophis the third, his successor, was not his first-born son.

On a tomb of his time at Thebes, there is a pictorial representation of the Jews making bricks, with Egyptian taskmasters standing over them. Israel through all her history, and now Egypt in her restoration, have stood forth as witnesses to the Word of the living God.

Let me now invite your attention to the spiritual truth enfolded in the divine narrative, important in relation to the world, but important also in relation to the hopes and fears of all those who are struggling after "the glorious liberty of the children of light." This history represents man's REGENERATION. And how contrary all its tenor is, in its spiritual lessons, to the fancy of those who imagine, that all which is needful, in order to prepare for heaven, is a sudden belief, an instantaneous faith, a sort of gasp after heaven accomplished by trust only, at a particular moment. We have already mentioned the proceedings in Egypt; then there is the further march of the Israelites and their being trained through so many years and along so many journeys, until they got to Canaan, and the conquest of Canaan itself; all teach the numerous and gradual changes of the soul.

The events of Egypt itself by which the deliverance of Israel was preceded, were by no means of a sudden or simple character.

Again and again were there charges coming from the Lord to Pharaoh; again and again were there pains, and punishments, and sorrows experienced by Pharaoh and the Egyptians; again and again when they struggled against the authority of the Most High, day after day, and night after night, were their contritions, sinnings, and repentings going on, all prefiguring the struggles of every soul when resolving really to begin to live for heaven. It is essential that this great truth should be constantly remembered, for many a person who has been told, that he can by some simple effort of belief do all that is necessary for heaven, has found by experience it is not so, and become bitterly perplexed. He has tried to come into a better mind. He has repented and trusted and made efforts, but he has fallen short of complete deliverance, and having been told, that, if he is saved at all, he must be saved at once by faith only, he has sunk into a sort of disobedient and lethargic condition. If he believes that it is by the mere simple effort that other people come into a state of salvation, he is oftentimes betrayed into giving up the desire to prepare for heaven, and to fancy that he shall never secure his end.

He has tried and it is of no use. Oh ! let him not think so ; let him bear in mind that his states are precisely what must take place in every soul, which comes into true regeneration, and what were represented by Israel's experience in Egypt. Let him earnestly strive again, and again, and again, and never give up. He may have prayed, and yearned, and watched, and wished, and found himself coming short. He may grow faint-hearted ; but let him take courage and strive again. It is "first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." It will be to him as it was to Israel in Egypt, if he is only faithful to watch and work, and wait, and however strong the fetters that bind him may be, they will be broken. The divine mercy will increase his power. The Lord will fight for him, and in good time deliverance will surely come. To all such we would say, "Fear ye not ; stand in order, and be still."

But there is a second circumstance to be brought vividly before our minds, if we would fully understand the spiritual meaning of this divine declaration, and one too, that lies immediately underneath the truth to which we have already adverted. It seems to persons that are not acquainted either with the condition of their own souls, or with the spiritual world with which we are all connected, that it is a strange thing we cannot walk up to the line that separates good and evil, and say we will step over that line, and get to the other side. Why cannot we make up our minds that we will be obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ, and there make an end of it ? Sometimes we suppose we have accomplished this decision, and sometimes we find great fault with other people who are so slow to do as we tell them. Sometimes we neglect to render that help which we ought to render to every struggling soul, because we act upon the unreasonable assumption, that people have not the common sense to do at once as we tell them, and pursue what is manifestly their own best course.

But, the human soul is wonderfully made. It is not that simple monad or breath, that it used to be considered. The human soul is far more wonderfully organised than the body is. It is a world in miniature. It has ten thousand thousand passions, affections, thoughts, sentiments, and ideas. Whole armies of sensations pass through the mind like an innumerable multitude, equalling and surpassing, doubtless, the number of the Egyptians, and the Israelites too. All these are in the soul.

When we are in good states, whole armies of good and heavenly thoughts and feelings make themselves felt, and live within us. When we are in evil states, whole armies of evil sensations and ideas each day are active within us. These are

heavenly principles in miniature, or infernal principles in miniature, and are innumerable. With these are, invisibly, but really associated, evil spirits and good spirits. Every evil man is associated with evil beings, and they again with others. He is connected, as it were, with whole hosts of the evil, so that the powers and spheres of the kingdom of darkness are like an immense sea, and are here represented by the Red Sea, through which the Israelites had to pass.

When a person determines that he will quit the company of the evil, renounce his evil companions and associations, his old habits and his old friends, and live for heaven; he has to burst through the meshes of a vast net, to break open a strong dungeon, to cross a threatening sea. Perhaps he accomplishes this, as far as his outside associations go. He changes his resorts, his friends, and his habits. To all appearance he has entered upon a new course, he has cut off the old ways, and the old life; but he will find that he has not altogether cut off the inner connection with his spiritual associates. He may have even driven them away. He may have broken asunder even from the evil spirits that were closely connected with him in mind; but, although they have given way under the impulses of his new and saving determinations, he will find them like the Egyptians coming again and again. Old habits will be strong upon him, his old persuasions will come, and they will tempt him strongly to his old haunts, and his old practices; and mentally, and if he is not exceedingly mindful, he will, literally, go back again into sin and captivity. Yet if he is truly earnest and sincere he will bemoan himself, he will feel as if he were a captive that had been rejoicing in his freedom, but had been pulled back again, and there he is with his old feelings and states, and practices again. This will occur again and again, at length he will appear altogether to have accomplished his purpose, and have left his Egypt. And having sought the divine goodness and truth of his Saviour, eaten the flesh, and sprinkled himself with the blood of the Paschal Lamb, and in mind, heart, and life commenced a new career, he has made a journey of three days, as the Israelites made their journey of three days. He will have rested first at Succoth, then at Etham, then at Migdol, over against Baal-zephon. He has cut himself off entirely, as he thinks, from his old states and habits and wishes, yet strangely, he will find the temptation come over him again. The old enemies, which he thought he had left far behind him, are approaching once more; he will hear the sound of their chariots and their horsemen coming after him again; and then it will

seem to him just as if he had the Red Sea before him. The sea of worldly and evil thought will lie in his way, and he will be oppressed with the idea that he cannot possibly get out of the element in which the world is immersed. All the persuasions of evil urge, saying,—it is no use your attempting to become good, it is no use your attempting to live a life of religion, it is no use your supposing that you can overcome fashion, prejudice, custom, and worldly allurements. Society is against you, you will make no way, give up the effort, do as others do, and take your chance. All false principles will gather in his front, and if he could see through the veil that hides the inner world from our perceptions, he would see a whole mass, as if it were of horrid waters in front of him—spiritual waters—the waters of falsehood and evil,—obstructing his way, as they did the way of the Israelites. Could we behold the scene, we should see the tried soul with crowds of evil spirits, coming after him and saying, “Behold, we will pursue, we will overtake, we will divide the spoil, our lust shall be satisfied upon them, we will draw our swords; our hand shall destroy them.”—Ex. xv. 9. We should find the soul spiritually, and in miniature, in circumstances parallel to the literal ones here given. It is impossible for a man by his own unaided efforts to break asunder those meshes of hell which surround him. Just as easy would it be for a person to roll back the waves of the stormy ocean, as for him to beat back the enemies of the soul by his own unaided power.

But when he is brought to this crisis; when he is beset before and behind; when he comes to the sad conviction that there is no help for him—that he must die—that he might as well have died before, for now it is clear he must perish—if he is sincere and genuine, and humbles himself before the Lord, feeling there is no help in himself, there will come this whisper from heaven, “Fear not, stand in order.” Shun evil. Do right. Wait upon the Lord. “Stand in order, and be still, and thou shalt see the salvation of the Lord, which he will do to-day.” A divine power will descend into his soul, and scatter the clouds that hang over his path, open a way before him of real liberty, upon which he can commence the journey which will end in the Canaan of Heaven.

Remember that great deliverance my brethren, for your own comfort, accompanied by this additional blessing, the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day,—the evils which have harassed you so sorely, and are harassing you so grievously now,—ye shall see no more for ever.

SERMON XIV.

THE SONG OF MOSES, AND THE BITTER WATERS OF MARAH.

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore, the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters became sweet: there he made for them a statute, and an ordinance, and there he proved them.”—Exodus xv, 24, 25.

The chapter from which our text is selected has this peculiarity—that it contains one of the oldest and grandest pieces of sublime poetry which exists in the world, and far more sublime than exists in any other language whatsoever. If we endeavour to realize this magnificent production in the circumstances in which it was given, we shall find how wonderful is the grandeur that is stored up in it. We must bear in mind its description of, and its applicability to, the peculiar circumstances of the Israelitish passage over the Red Sea. There is seen the eagerness of Pharaoh and his host to seize their escaping bondsmen, and make them their slaves once more. The Israelites, apparently cooped up and imprisoned, saw the dreaded Egyptian army behind them, the chariots and horsemen led by Pharaoh himself, and the vast host of infantry behind, for they had rallied from their discomfited condition, when they had allowed Israel to escape them, and had increased every step in eagerness,—we might say in viciousness—until at length the excitement was beyond all expression, except in such magnificent and graphic sentences as those which occur in this chapter, “The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satiated upon them.” Just conceive the tyrannical pride, the impetuous ardour to grasp the prey and make it once more their own, which is expressed in these words. Then the Word goes on, “And I will draw my sword,” thus expressive, as it were, of the very moment of inflicting their vengeance upon the Israelites:—“My hand shall destroy them.” And then think of the sublime majesty and power of the Godhead which defeated all this malignity, “Thou did’st blow with

thy wind." There was no array of outward parade, but the invisible power of the wind was all that was needed to discomfit the eager and serried host, and render the whole mass weak, sinking, and silent, as it is described a little further on, "The sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together; the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea." There is nothing equal to this in majesty and sublimity, even in its very letter, in any language whatsoever, finishing up, as it does, with those sublime words, in the 17th and following verse, "Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for them to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

But interesting as these divine events are in the letter, sublime, and beyond all measure magnificent, as they are in the circumstances in which they are given, and eloquent and grand as are the descriptions of those astonishing events, we must bear in mind that they call our attention to something infinitely more grand than the scene disclosed in the letter of the Word before us. And here allow me to remark, that though hitherto we have dwelt upon the various circumstances of Israel in Egypt, and their delivery from the house of bondage, especially in relation to the spiritual deliverance by which every man who comes into the path of the regenerate life is redeemed from the powers of evil, and of hell; yet there is a sublime redemption, a wondrous series of events of illimitable grandeur, that is prefigured in relation to the whole condition of the universe, in this sublime deliverance of Israel from Egypt. This wondrous event is that of the redemption of the world, which differs only in magnitude, from the redemption of each individual soul.

We cannot pass on in the divine history before us then, without first resting here for a little time, to contemplate the teaching of this wondrous narrative in relation to that still more wondrous event.

You are aware that at the time when it became necessary for God to become a Redeemer, the whole world was in a worse than Egyptian bondage,—it was in a spiritual bondage, in which the powers of hell enveloped the human mind to so deep, to so horrid an extent, that we can but faintly grasp the truth while we learn it from the Prophets and from the Gospels.

Through a long series of degradations the powers of darkness had been multiplied. Millions of bad men had passed into the

eternal world, and taken their selfishness and falsehood and infamy with them ; and the result was that the powers of hell had increased. The powers of heaven had been rejected, until human minds, as seen by the eye of the all-seeing God, were just as the description in the Word, where we are told that "they sat in darkness and the shadow of death." "I looked" it is said by the Lord, in the 59th of Isaiah, "and there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor." "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered ? 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 all flesh shall know that I Jehovah am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."—Isaiah xlix. 24, 26. Now that wondrous work of redemption, so little understood and so much perverted by those who are for ever crying—believe that Christ died for you ; believe that Christ saved you—but understand scarcely a whit of the sublime work in which redemption and salvation consisted and consists, was Israel brought out of Egypt.

The powers of hell are here represented on the one hand by the Red Sea, as one awful mass of falsehood, interposing itself against the progress of the people ; and on the other hand, those who were malignantly opposed to what is good, being interiorly bad, are represented by Pharaoh and his host pursuing. Conceive of this ! Realize the awful spectacle, and then just look at the chapter, and see who it was that saved them, and you will perceive, in every salient point of this description, it is declared to be Jehovah Himself. At the very commencement, how sublimely this is given (bearing in mind that wherever we find "Lord" written in capital letters, it is "Jehovah" in the original) "I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. He is my God and I will prepare him a habitation ; my father's God and I will exalt him. Jehovah is a man of war : Jehovah is his name." How different from that idea so widely spread, the root of so many false notions, and of so many evils of conduct,—that Jehovah was the Being who held the people in bondage ; who weighed them down by His wrath ; who threatened them with eternal ruin ; who had to be pacified ; who had to be bribed to be gracious by the punishment of Christ, a punishment infinitely dear, and infinitely terrible. As if the Lord Jesus Christ were not God Himself, and His sufferings, while He was redeeming men, were not from evil men

and evil spirits. It was Jehovah Himself that was our Redeemer. The very same truth that is taught here, and throughout almost every verse of this divine song, is found in nearly every chapter of the divine prophecies.

We read in Isaiah xliii. 10, "Before me there was no God formed; neither shall there be after me. I even I am Jehovah, and beside me, there is no Saviour." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people."—Luke i. 68. It is always the same truth. The Lord of infinite love, our adorable Father is our Redeemer Himself. And who does not feel his heart spring up with ten thousand times more thankfulness to believe that he is saved and redeemed by, and that he will owe every blessing to his Heavenly Father. I would not like to think I was saved by anybody else. It would disturb the gratitude that loves Him, because He created and formed me with all my faculties of mind and body, to think that all these had been of no use if it had not been that some other came and redeemed me. Oh no! we could not love with all our hearts a God whose plan in creation was utterly defeated unless he was helped out by a second divine person. Rather let me with the deepest emotions of a thankful heart say, in the language again of the prophecy of Isaiah, "Thou, Oh Jehovah, art our Father and Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting."

All mankind were redeemed, and therefore all mankind were made salvable. But salvation itself comes after our souls have been set free, and as individuals we fight against our own evils by the Lord's power, and expel them from the heart. Until redemption was effected, souls could not do that. They were fettered, they were in captivity, they were Israel in Egypt. But when redemption had been completed they were free, and could work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Of the Lord it is said, "His name should be called Jesus"—for He would save His people from their sins. The Lord worked out our redemption alone, but He gives us the power to work out our salvation, by co-operating with Him.

Hence, we have it described as the chief point of the redemption from Egypt by the Red Sea, that the triumph for which this glorious song was offered, was of Jehovah alone. So the redemption of the world was of Jehovah alone. The feelings of thankfulness and gratitude, glowed with the holy outburst. "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." This song of triumph was when their redemption was entirely completed. When the redemption of the world was finished, and hell conquered, all heaven burst into heartfelt and triumphant glorification, which was the

song of spiritual Israel then, "Lift up your heads O ye gates ; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory ? Jehovah strong and mighty. Jehovah mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors ! and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory ? Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of Glory." Psalm xxiv. 7, 10.

Let us now resume our consideration of the Israelitish journey.

Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, "and they went out into the wilderness of Shur, and they went three days into the wilderness and found no water." v. 22.

When we recollect the previous history of Moses, we shall be convinced he was admirably fitted for the leadership of the people in a country with which he must have been well acquainted. Although related in very simple expressions, such as needs reflection to enable us to make ourselves acquainted with the full meaning of the divine narrative, we must not forget that Moses was forty years old when he fled from the palace of the daughter of Pharaoh, and eighty years old when he returned to commence the deliverance of his enslaved brethren. During the intervening period he had been chiefly inhabiting the neighbourhood of the foot of Mount Sinai, and the wilderness of Shur, and thus for forty years had been familiarizing himself with the whole district, and consequently, was an instrument perfectly prepared for the divine work that he had to perform in this country, into which he led Israel. The circumstances mentioned, are such as enable us if we are at all acquainted with the natural condition of the country, to recall every particular that is wanted here—to think, first, of the dry and arid wilderness through which the people had to pass, within the distance which must have been traversed in these three days. There would be all the circumstances intimated here—a hot sun, arid rocks, sands all around, with just one exception. There is a small oasis in the desert called the wells of Moses to the present day, where probably the Israelites drank and made ready for the succeeding journey of three days.

Then comes a district which is easily reached in three days, where there is still a stream of brackish bitter water, now called Howara. Probably this is the very stream which is intimated as having been found by the Israelites. They would doubtless be in a state of great thirst. They would be excited by the sight of water, as is customary with the Arabs when they have travelled far, with little of the refreshing stream. Then when they found its bitter nauseous taste was such as to prevent them from enjoying

it, in their disappointment, they said murmuring, "What shall we drink."

Now, in all this is represented precisely what takes place in the regenerate life. We shall have the key to it, and to all the circumstances which are brought before us in the remainder of this chapter, if we bear in mind the correspondence of water. First, we have the waters of the Red Sea; next, we have the water after which the people longed; then, we have the bitter water which they could not drink, again, there is the sweetened water that seems to have been a delightful enjoyment after their trouble; and lastly, the abundant water mentioned at the end of the chapter, v. 27, "And they came to Elim where were twelve wells of water."

How beautiful, how valuable, how universally useful is WATER.

We have said that the key to the interesting instruction which is given in these several parts, is just simply that correspondence of water which exhibits it as the symbol of truth, or its opposite; and which, when reading the Sacred Word, or when we are seeing water in any of its conditions in the world, we should never forget. It is in the very nature of things that water is the symbol of truth. Just as water is the grand means of purifying the body, so Truth is the grand means of cleansing the soul; and hence you find it written, "I will pour clean water upon you, and will cleanse you from all defilements saith the Lord."

Water is the great means that enables our food to go through the process of being turned into the strength and the nourishment of the body.

Without water, neither food, medicine, nor manufactures could exist. Vegetation would languish and speedily perish without WATER.

Without water there would be no digestion. All beverages are water with more or less of addition, and derive from water their chief efficacy and value.

Water is the universal solvent, the universal purifier. Water is the soul of all medicines, and in its various applications the most potent means of health.

By water those lovely colours are obtained which enrich the robe of the monarch, and give homely beauty to the dress of the cottager.

All the operations of the human body require water, and the body itself is composed three-fourths of water, and one-fourth of all other substances.

In its rivers, seas, and oceans, water is the grandest of highways.

No landscape is charming without water; a fountain in the sunbeams is one of the most beautiful objects in nature, and water itself, fresh and clear, dazzles the eye with a loveliness like liquid silver.

Well then may WATER be regarded as the symbol of that which in its relation to the soul is equally useful, equally healthful, equally universal, equally beautiful,—TRUTH. Truth refreshes the soul, truth purifies the soul, truth fertilizes the soul, truth builds up the soul in nobleness and usefulness of character, truth constitutes like water the way to good and progress of every kind. Truth brings out the loveliness of everything else, and is a supreme beauty in itself. TRUTH therefore is SPIRITUAL WATER.

We read in the Scriptures of drinking of the "water of life," of "doctrine which comes down like gentle showers upon the grass," of being made "clean by the Word," of "being sanctified by the truth," of "thirsting after righteousness," of "fountains of living water," and of "the stream of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of the Eternal." All these attributes of water applied to our mental wants, reveal the incalculable importance of truth, of divine truth, to the well-being of the immortal soul.

Yet there are a great number of persons who live as if they had never learned the fact, that truth is the grand element of power and progress, who go on through the whole of their life in the world, just accepting mentally what other people ask them to take, and never enquiring what is truth and grasping it. The circumstance that without water solid food is of little use, and that we can endure much longer without solid food than without water, teaches us the importance of water, and by correspondence the importance of truth. Our very body, as we said, is built up of water, and so is every sound spiritual system. The mind that does not yearn after truth, that does not pray to the Lord, "Give me to drink," that does not sigh and long after the truth in the spirit expressed in the Psalms, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." Such a soul has no real healthy life. With such a soul there is no real solid progress. He lives in delusions, and dreams and dies, without ever acquiring that true nobility of character which constitute man's chief likeness to God. "Ho! every one that thirsteth," says the Word, "come ye to the waters, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price."

When the soul has fully realized the blessings of one state, and

made its gracious mercies its own, it is prepared for further and higher truth. That it may come into an ardent spiritual appetite, it does not obtain that new truth at once. It goes three days, or through a full spiritual experience, and finds no water.

It then comes to water, but BITTER WATER. That is, truth is revealed to it, but truth bitter, unpleasant and condemnatory.

How often is this the case! Truth reveals to us tempers which we now see for the first time are not heavenly.

Some annoyance, some trial, some disappointment, shews us we can be angry, impatient, unforbearing, and unkind.

We cannot bear this truth. We cannot drink this water. What shall we drink?

If we have elevated the LAW OF THE LORD—our Moses, to be our leader, he will cry unto the Lord, and the Lord will shew him some WOOD, as the word translated tree in our text, might be better rendered. Wood corresponds to the solid love of duty. It is the solid substance of a tree. The wood thrown into the waters turned them sweet, to teach us, that the spirit of duty which takes divine teaching however unpleasant, and determines lovingly to obey, which takes up the cross and kisses it as it were, this will turn the bitterest waters into sweetness.

The wise have long known that

“Sweet are the uses of adversity.”

“Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” “Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow,” is the language of the Psalmist, and of the true soul in every age. And when the regenerating soul says lovingly and meekly, “Thy will be done,” a softening, hallowing, sweetening process commences, a smile from heaven lights up the tear, the bitter waters become sweet.

This is said to be for them a statute and an ordinance.

This blessed lesson is for true Israelites in every age. Let us never forget it. Whenever the waters of truth are bitter to us, let us pray to our Heavenly Father to make us faithful, obedient, and true, and soon shall we realize the fact that what is bitter is often salutary, and then comes the blessing. “Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.”

SERMON XV.

THE QUAILS AND THE DEW.

"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."—EXODUS xvi. 13.

To those who have regarded without any deep knowledge of human nature the wonderful circumstances of which the Israelites had been witnesses, who remember the astonishing displays of Divine Omnipotence, of divine patience and long suffering, that they had witnessed in Egypt, during their passage thence, and in their sojourn thus far on the border of the Wilderness, it does seem an astonishing thing, that now, within one month, the Israelites should be murmuring against the Lord, distrusting His divine providence, imagining that they were about to perish, and fancying that they had left something that was really worthy of their regrets, when they left what they called the flesh-pots of Egypt, and what they now described as bread to the full.

To those who suppose that good and evil are simply opposites, that when a man leaves the one he takes the other, and that the whole work is then completed, the Israelitish history will appear to be remarkably perplexing. It pictures to us variations, temptations, trials, murmurings, victories, and so on from time to time throughout the whole of forty years sojourn and pilgrimage. And yet, if we are right in describing the exodus of the Israelites as a divine drama, illustrative of regeneration, where the scenes are extensive countries, the actors, a whole nation, their history the Word of God for all ages and for all nations, then we must find their history to be but the reflex of human spiritual history in every age.

If we have sought to come out of the bondage of our Egypt, if we have made any progress in our way towards the land whither we go to possess it, then has it been precisely the case with us as it was with Israel. We have supposed at times that we are now so thoroughly on the Lord's side that all will hence-

forth be right—that we shall never be thoughtless again. But, in a very short time we find ourselves murmuring at the loss of some little pleasure, or at the anticipation of some danger. We have feelings of anxiety, and are as far away from peace and inward satisfaction as though we had experienced no deliverance at all. And so we go on, up and down, in sunshine and in rain, through our days and nights, summer and winter, each bringing those varieties of feeling and condition which have attended the history of the children of God in every age.

We need not wonder, therefore, at the divine history before us ; in fact it describes the discipline of all who are trained for heaven. “ Because they knew no changes,” it is written in the Psalms concerning some, “ therefore they knew not God.” He who seeks that thorough change of his fallen and perverted nature, which must be accomplished in order to have a new heart, and a right spirit, an angelic love of what God loves, and real heavenly thoughts, in harmony with the thoughts of angels, must be prepared for all these changes ; he must remember that they are the needful incidents of his preparation for heaven. It was an instance of this representative kind, that was presented by the Israelites at the time we have now to consider. They murmured and entreated the Lord, and quails were given them in the evening ; then dew descended in the morning, and when it disappeared it left the manna behind which provided for all their wants.

We have said it was now about a month since the Israelites quitted Egypt. We are told that this was the fifteenth day of the second month, and you will remember that it was on the fourteenth day of the first month that they commenced their march out of Egypt, so that they seem in taking the half-prepared bread, which they hastily made ready when they departed from Egypt, to have been provided with a sufficiency of food for about a month. This supply had now come to an end. The Wilderness and famine were before them. No doubt it was, humanly speaking, a question of considerable anxiety how they should be fed. There were themselves, their wives, and their children—two millions of people,—having exhausted all their provision for the way, and with apparently a foodless country before them. They would have perished had it not been for the divine supply which was made for them, and which is described in this chapter as the manna.

But allow me to notice as we pass on, the peculiar interest which there is for the thoughtful and well-informed reader, in

the different incidents of this important journey. Every particular as it comes up, reminds us of the incidents which are common to the traveller in the same parts of the world even at the present day. When a pilgrim advances from Egypt, crosses the Red Sea, and comes upon the border of the Wilderness, he finds just such circumstances as are here described—a few palm-trees, a few wells of water; then some bitter water, at Howara—probably the Marah of Scripture. Then often come quails, just as they are described here—a sort of sea-pheasant—a small water bird, and yet frequently found thus far from the sea. The traveller realizes these things now. Even the manna is to be found yet. On the trees, which are sparsely scattered there is a sweet kind of substance often gathered which is called manna to the present day, and which is probably the very same sort of food given to the Israelites, only given to them more abundantly at the time to which this history alludes. We are thus taught that the wonderful miracles, the extraordinary scenes and circumstances of this astonishing and world elevating history, were events similar in kind to those of the present day, only on a somewhat grander scale. They were not things contrary to nature; they were only exhibitions of powers common in nature, but given with greater force, greater energy, and with a divine end in view, by the King of Kings, the production of His all-saving Word.

It has sometimes been enquired, “On what food did the cattle subsist?”

This question arises from a mistake as to the character of the Wilderness. It is supposed that the Wilderness of Sinai and Sin, or the commencement of it, towards Sinai, was an arid desert of rocks and barren plains, sand here, sand there, and sand everywhere. In such a country the cattle could not possibly be supplied with food, and there was no miraculous food sent for them. And if the cattle perished, how could the sacrifices be kept up, how could the Passover be kept twelve months after, in which there had to be a lamb, or a kid for every house? An accurate knowledge of the character of the district to be passed through clears up these questions. A wilderness does not mean a desert, where nothing grows; it means a wild district where there may be considerable fertility, but which is not cultivated into ordinary fields, vineyards and oliveyards. In the Sacred Scripture it is clear that the ordinary places for feeding cattle were in the Wilderness. Moses fed the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, at the back of the mountain,

"in the wilderness." And you will no doubt remember very well the question which was put by David's elder brother, when the youth had gone out to enquire how they were all faring in the army, "Where hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?" And so you will find from time to time reference made to the pastures of the Wilderness. There was, in fact, abundance of fertility, though of a rude and uncultivated kind. That, therefore, is the sort of country we must think of, and not a country where sheep could not graze, or where cattle could not live.

There was a portion of the Wilderness utterly waste and terrible, where no man dwelt, and this is occasionally alluded to in the Scripture, as in Deut. viii. 15., but generally there was a sufficient pasture for cattle.

Permit me now to call your attention to the spiritual lesson involved in the condition of the Israelites, and their changes—their joys and sorrows—their grief and pain—their states of comfort and satisfaction. The first general truth seems to teach that the work of regeneration is not that light business which many imagine. It is not a sudden gasp, a sudden cry, a piercing prayer, and nothing more. It is not just walking up to a line and saying, "Now I will cross over, and then I shall be on the good side, and shall have no trouble whatsoever." It is an entirely different process. It is the restoration of the soul. Ten thousand thousand little particulars in the organized condition of the human heart and mind are all now by nature turned in the wrong direction. Every fibre in the lower degree of the soul is perverted, and turned towards things of earth, things of self, and things of hell. Regeneration is the restoring of this infinitude of parts to heavenly order, and building us up in the beauty of angelic life. It requires, therefore, that there should be change after change. Just as—to illustrate it by a very common occurrence—if a limb is broken and wrongly set, or if other important parts of the human body have been severely injured, they can only be gradually got into a state of health and order. It must be by slow degrees—healing a little at a time, so that the parts may knit up, and become fully and completely and rightly healed. Just so is it with the human soul. The heart, as we are told, is by nature "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"—a little hell. He knows nothing who does not know himself; and he who knows himself knows that there are in him tendencies to everything that is mean, malignant, unholy, and impure. Only by matchless

patience, love and tenderness, does the Lord bring man back into a state of heavenly order. "It is first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." If a man will quietly and patiently walk according to the divine will and commandments, the King of Kings will build him up, renew him inwardly—not taking notice of, and condemning all the little outcries of impatience and difficulty, but wisely, patiently, and lovingly turning him towards heaven more and more, until in good time, he feels that he is renewed, and has the healthful spirit of heaven.

This, then, is the lesson we have to learn here. While we have thousands of temptations, while we have abundance of trials, while we have what many times makes us complain, there is in reality not a tear or a trial too many, not a sorrow in which our Heavenly Father overlooks us. When we begin we are gold in the rough, when the gold is purified there will no fire of tribulation distress us any more. We shall enter happily into heaven's glorious kingdom.

The immediate subject of our text is the divine goodness in providing them flesh when they longed for flesh. They were promised quails—the flesh of a sea-bird at even, and the next morning the dew was to descend, which would furnish them with bread for the future.

Evening and morning are representative in the spiritual sense of states. Merely natural life is to spiritual life, as evening is to morning. Merely natural love, feelings, thoughts and enjoyments are as shade to light, when compared with spiritual delights. Hence, in the divine history before us, there is presented first of all the goodness of our Heavenly Father in furnishing us with the comforts of merely natural life, represented by the flesh of these sea-birds given in the evening; and afterwards the divine loving-kindness is seen when a new state of spiritual life descends upon us—when it is morning within, and there is a descent of the dew of divine peace and truth. He gave them flesh in the evening, and dew in the morning.

To perceive the precise application of these terms, and the divine things to which they refer, it will be well for us to bear in mind that "flesh" is the symbol of goodness. Flesh and blood in the human body are the two great constituents, and they represent the two great constituents of all things, when they are used as symbols. Thus, the flesh of the Lord is representative of His divine goodness, and the blood of the Lord of His divine wisdom. In that conversation of His, which so astonished the

Jews, and which is given in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, He says, "The bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. If any man eat my flesh and drink my blood, he shall have eternal life." The Jews went about and said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" They supposed that He was speaking of His bodily flesh. But the Lord reiterated the instruction, "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." And so it is. Because by the Lord's flesh, which must be eaten to receive eternal life, is meant that infinite goodness of His that imparts the life of inward love and purity to the christian soul. He who does not eat this flesh has no life in him. Flesh, therefore, represents, as we have said, the substantial, yet soft, and holy goodness, which descends from the Lord, and gives to man His likeness. Flesh is that kindness of heart, that spirit of charity, which is the true companion of faith. Hence, when regeneration is described by the Lord in the first chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy, He says, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." He will give a kind heart, a loving heart of goodness. The selfish hardness that cares for nothing but its own sordid interests, shall be taken away. "I will give you a heart of flesh." In the same way it is said in Jeremiah xi., 15, "The holy flesh has gone off thee, for I have found iniquity in thee." That is to say, holy goodness has gone away from you, and you have been falling into grievous sin. In the Psalms it is said, "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." That is to say, the spirit of real love for God, and real love for our neighbour, yearn to be supported by truth from the King of Kings.

The flesh was the flesh of a sea-bird, because the sea which surrounds the land is representative of the external sphere of mind which surrounds the soul; and the sea-bird's flesh is representative of that lowest of all goodness, the goodness of rejoicing in our social joys. The good of the pleasures of earth when used in moderation, is granted by the Lord to the religious man just as much, and in fact more, than it is to any other. With the evil, such pleasures are the flesh-pots of Egypt. With the good, such pleasures are the flesh of quails.

Yet this very flesh, when it was not used in moderation twelve months afterwards at the foot of Sinai, produced terrible diseases. We are told in the eleventh chapter of the book of Numbers that the people partook so voraciously of quails that a plague broke out amongst them, and utter destruction showed

the condemnation by the Divine Being of their immoderate use of merely natural delights. But the lesson here is to teach us, that, it is not the will of our Heavenly Father when we become truly religious that we should become ascetics. The enjoyment of the pleasures of home, the pleasures of company, the refined pleasures of the beautiful in art, the charms of music and poetry, the pleasures of outward delights, so far as they are combined with, and moderated by the spirit of justice, the spirit of improvement, and the spirit of resistance to all known sin are innocent and pure. In fact, the truly religious man has more real enjoyment, more thorough delight in his moderate enjoyments than any mere sensualist can have. When a person becomes a drunkard, he has no longer the pleasure of a true and temperate use of food. When a person becomes a glutton, the blessing of taste becomes a curse; he tries to obtain delight, but he destroys his capacity of enjoyment. The true use of natural pleasures is represented by the Lord's permitting them to have this flesh at even. The good must have their outward pleasures, and they may really enjoy themselves in them. He has a poor conception of religion who would forbid children to have their childish games, who would forbid the natural man to have his natural delights. All that the Lord desires is, that earthly delights should be kept in subservience to spiritual delights, and that true joy may be pure and full. "I come not," the Lord says, "to take your joy away from you, but that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." He came not to destroy earth's roses, but simply to take away the thorns. Hence it is, that, He gave to these people quails in the evening. When the state of evening is with us, He gives us natural delights to be enjoyed, but to be ever enjoyed with order, truth, purity and innocence. He gave them quails in the evening; and then this evening of theirs gradually made way for another state—the state of morning.

In all the circumstances of our lives there are evenings and mornings. Change and vicissitude are inherent in all things. So is the kingdom of God, the Lord Jesus says, "as if a man 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, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." We have thus our states of change. Sometimes our spiritual part is all weak, we are weary, and desire rest—this is evening. Then comes a period of vigor, when we hunger and thirst after righteousness. We can take full doses of heavenly blessing.

"Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it," the Lord says in such cases. This is our morning state. Then after a little there comes a state in which we feel that we have had enough of this spiritual supply. We must rest. Our morning fades into evening. It is a natural state with us. We do not think so much about heavenly things as about those of earth. We do what is right in earthly things, and this is religious also, but it is evening. In our natural concerns, if we have had a well-spent day, if we have done our morning's work cheerfully and joyously, when the shades of evening come on, how gratefully, how delightfully we can sit, and rest, and feel that the Lord hath blessed us hitherto. We have a kindly and grateful heart towards Him, and towards all. And then "he giveth his beloved sleep." It is just so in our changes of soul. Hence it is said in our text, that after the evening there came dew in the morning. The opening of the spiritual state, the opening of internal wakefulness, the opening of the angelic state within us makes a heavenly morning.

"In the morning the dew lay all round the host." The dew of the soul is calm, quiet, holy, peaceful wisdom which comes down when we are in fresh states of holy love. At such times there is no anxiety, but a sweet heart—speaking peace. The wisdom thus received is called theologically, "the truth of peace." It is the Lord himself descending as dew into the soul and blessing every thing there. He says "I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall grow as the lily."—Hos. xiv. 5. Again, "I will consider in my dwelling-place, like a clear heat upon herbs and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."—Isaiah xviii. 4. And in the same way the descent of this interior blessing is described in the 133rd Psalm, where it is said, "How good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." "It is like the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountain of Sion; for there the Lord commanded a blessing, even life for evermore."

Oh may this dew of peace, too holy for words, descend upon us and bless us, as each new morning comes, and the Sun of Righteousness arises upon us with healing in His wings.

SERMON XVI.

THE MANNA.

"And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack ; they gathered every man according to his eating. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning."—EXODUS xvi. 18, 19.

In considering the astonishing particulars that are related in the divine account of the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, we are not to suppose that even the miracles, which are recorded as having happened both in Egypt and on the journey, were things opposed to the law of the Divine Being in creation. It is one thing for there to be a greater activity than usual in nature, one thing to bring powers down into play that are not ordinarily experienced, as we find at various intervals. Storms and sunshine, earthquakes and calm, tides unusually high, and tides unusually low, plenty one year, scarcity the next, revolutions and rest, epidemics moral and physical, all show that nature's laws are not monotonous. Yet God never acts contrary to His nature. He never reverses His laws. With Him there is no shadow of change. The law of His love governs all other laws, and varies them if needful. And this remark will be seen to be applicable on the occasion of the extraordinary circumstances related in this chapter, as well as on other occasions. In the country where these things took place, both prior and subsequent, down to the present day, there is the production of manna. The abundance of it was the only miracle mentioned.

There are found on certain trees, and in regions where these occurrences took place, down to the present day, exudations or substances, differing in quantity, but probably precisely the same in quality, as the manna which was so abundantly laid about the host. So that all that is involved in the miracle is a more wonderful display of the divine activities at one period than another. Divine love required this to accomplish its gracious purposes.

We can conceive no purpose more important, or more gracious, than that which had to be accomplished on this occasion, and it would be a libel against the divine love to suppose that it would not be done. The Holy Word was to be written, which, throughout all ages, should teach the way in which men are gradually disciplined and trained to become angels ; how they are led from step to step from the benighted selfish state, which is represented by Israel in Egypt, up to that state of freedom, of beauty, and of blessing, which is the inward condition when heaven is in the soul, and which prepares us for heaven at last. It is this consideration, then, that will assist us to understand how all the occurrences which are described here took place, literally, when it was needed to be literally done in order to be a basis for the grand truths of the soul and its regeneration. The loving soul will have no difficulty in conceiving this. The cold heart goes on in dull routine, and shrinks from change, however a great end may require it. Love laughs at impossibilities and says, it must be done. Love is the wonder-worker. It constantly does **MIRACLES**.

Originally, no doubt, man was as obsequious to the divine will and government as other creatures. Animals are born in the true order of their existence now, and whatever that order requires they follow. Their instincts unerringly bring it about. Each animal knows the plants or other food upon which its health and strength depend. It will take these and scarcely be induced to vary them. Each animal knows the proper mode of habitation, and of the procreation of its species, in fact, all the particulars of its life are written upon its very being. No doubt it was so with man before that desecration of his nature which has been called "The Fall," and which was continued through successive ages. He had written upon his heart at first, love to the Lord, love to all around him—the disposition to truth and goodness, to true happiness and to heaven. When this was the case, the influence of the Lord's spirit of holiness would guide and conduct, and lead from step to step in his being, upward and onwards towards perfection for ever. But at present the inward propensities of the heart are degraded and debased. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." If man, therefore, were left now to the impulses of his own nature ; if the divine spirit only flowed into him inwardly, the light would shine in darkness, but the darkness would comprehend it not. There would continue to be a state such as is realized wherever the Word of God is despised and neglected.

But inasmuch as that Word does exercise influence at second-hand and third-hand, in fact in all directions, we can scarcely have a fair and complete idea of what really would be the effect, if the human race were utterly destitute of the outward Word. Certain it is that human beings, when not under the government of the Divine Will and left without the teachings of the Divine Word, are so thoroughly debased and fiendish, that no atrocity is too great, no wickedness too terrible for them to commit. It is only by the influence of the Word, directly or indirectly, that a better nature is restored. If we bear this in mind and turn our attention to facts, we shall learn the inestimable value of the Word of God.

Where insurrection suspends law, and depraved human beings are left uncontrolled by the influences of society, and of the law which society honours from the Word of God; we may then have an idea of what man is in the depraved recesses of his fallen nature. We may thus think what requires to be done in order to reform this—to regenerate man's nature within him, and have an angelic nature imparted to him.

In his regenerate state he needs no outward law of duty. It is his love to do good; his loathing to do what is wrong. An entire inward angelic nature is given to him, so that he would not sin, not only if he had no threat before him, but even to gain the whole world. "He that is born of God sinneth not." It is impossible for him to sin. Think then what the change must be, that is required by regeneration. The means, the order and the time which bring this state of things about, changing man's fallen nature to a new and thoroughly regenerated state of soul, are meant by that strange and wonderful journey of the Israelites through the Wilderness.

They had come to the desert. That desert produced little or no food; certainly not the necessary means of supply. What then would have happened? Why unless divine mercy interposed, the whole people would have perished. They did not perish; they were led through the Wilderness and ultimately took possession of the promised land. Divine supplies were given; and divine mercy was sufficient for all their wants.

This gift of manna is precisely the symbol of what happens in the case of every regenerate person. We think when we have taken the step of separating ourselves from irreligion, and determined that we will live for heaven, the change is made, the work is done. When we have taken this great determination and entered upon our new course by yearnings, prayers, and efforts, we

are apt to think all is completed. We sing as the Israelites sang on the borders of the Red Sea after they had passed over; "Jehovah hath triumphed, his people are free."

We imagine that now henceforward we shall go on most happily. Our Heavenly Father we shall supremely love, and do His will continually. For a short time perhaps we are enabled to keep up this state of feeling: but after a while we begin to experience precisely what the Israelites did—a sort of barrenness of heart, a kind of want. Somewhat of our old states of distrust comes over us; the old nature becomes more or less influential, and if it were not for miraculous interposition, we should now spiritually perish. If the Israelites had been left to feed upon the food grown in the Wilderness, they must all have died from famine. If we were left to the delights our own states produced, we too should spiritually die. But it is not so: the Lord gives us bread from heaven, or in other words, He imparts to us what our own nature would not produce—comforts and states of light, of love, and peace. Angels are joined to us, who induce upon us states far above our own internal advancement, "He gives his angels charge concerning us to keep us in all our ways"; and the result is thoughts of mercy, thoughts of good, thoughts of confidence, and thoughts of loving-kindness, cheer, strengthen and elevate us. A sort of interior heaven is brought about in us, so that we live in an atmosphere far higher than our own. It is with us all just as it was with the Israelites. Our evils are hushed, our propensities are subdued; our wild beasts of passion and lust are muzzled, and the Lord gives us meat from heaven. "Man eats angels food." Things come into his soul immeasurably better and more abundant than what grew there naturally. Those sweet and holy feelings are what are represented here by the MANNA.

It is said, "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna."—Rev. ii. 17. "The hidden manna"—that inward state of sweetness, peace, and good that imparts to the soul a satisfaction far higher than aught which earth has ever given. In our spiritual journey a supply is divinely provided, and constantly provided, which animates, cheers, and encourages us on our way, as this manna did the Israelites on their journey.

Let us look at the description of it. It is said that it was a small round thing which gathered round about the host, like hoar frost. And a little farther on you will find it is stated to have been like wafers made of honey.—v. 31. They were to gather of it just sufficient for the day, every day except the day preceding the Sabbath, when a double portion was to be received.

Thus they were supplied during the forty years until they came to the land of Canaan, which out of its own soil would produce them plenty. They lived the first year after their entrance, on the old corn of the land.

There is a very curious particular involved in the name manna, and one which seems somewhat contradictory. It is mentioned that the Israelites were astonished at finding this manna spread on all the country round. "When the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna : for they wist not what it was." It seems a very curious reason for calling it "manna," that they wist not what it was. But the peculiarity of this statement will disappear when we are aware that the word "manna" or "manhu" are the two Hebrew words for "what is it," so that the people when they beheld this covering of manna all round about the camp, said to each other, "what is it," and the result was, that this provision was called "what is it" during all future generations. This is the reason, why it is said, they called it "manna", because they knew not what it was : and in this respect you will perceive how beautiful the representation is. The manna depicts the new feeling and new joy which come to a person after he has commenced his regenerate life. The first states of joy and triumph have passed, and he begins to be sensible how great a distance must needs be traversed before he becomes really heavenly. When he looks within, and has it revealed to him by divine light what a desert he is, what a desert he has to go through ; that instead of his being so heavenly as he thought he was, he can scarcely bear to have an unkind observation made to him, but he starts up and is full of passion : that instead of being unselfish as the angels are, there is self in every thought, in every wish, and in every act—there is somewhat of the trail of the serpent over him altogether—when he feels that instead of its being all joy to him to do right even if it opposes his own apparent interests, he has the greatest difficulty to bring himself up to the condition of not doing even grievous wrong, if he has the power to do it, and nobody is likely to find it out : when he has thus his own desolate condition revealed to him, and is clearly shewn what he is and what he ought to be, he mourns in deep distress, discouragement, and despair at the revelation. At length a new state is opened in him, a state of comfort from the Lord all round about the soul, then he is in bliss indeed.

All round about his mind the Lord has opened to him sources of elevation and heavenliness ; and all seems sweet and happy

with him. There is such an intensity of light, such a new found joy, such a blessing throughout his whole being, which far surpasses all earthly joy, and everything that he has known before. He feels that he can be angelic, that he can be happy, that health, and help, and blessing are brought home to him, that somehow he is lifted above himself, that he does really enjoy full peace in the holy states which are opened in his heart and mind. No pleasures of sense, no graces or charms of nature or art ever opened up such feelings of delight, and he says, "What is it?" "What is it?" It is the peace of God that passes all understanding, it is the joy of heaven of which it is said, "The kingdom of God is within." "What is it?" he says? He has no name for it. He has never felt it before. It is so heart entrancing—it is heaven itself within; and so all that he can say is, all that any of us can say is, it is beyond all words, and all understanding, we will call it "what is it" for ever and for ever.

Such is the divine idea that is enclosed in this remarkable account. They called it "what is it," for they knew not what it was.

Allow me, my beloved friends, you who have experienced any thing of this kind, to ask, whether that was not precisely the case with you—whether when the heart was thus blessed, and you stood entranced, it matters not where it was, or when it was, however lovely, or however dark the scene—when these states were first opened within you, and you felt that you were really tasting some of the bliss of heaven, from the King of Heaven—did you not feel as this language imparts? Here is something above all price; here is the joy unspeakable, the divine blessing surpassing all knowledge and all thought. There is a name written upon that white stone which no one knows but he who has received it.

This divine manna is from the Lord Jesus Christ, and is His blessed goodness in man. He Himself said, "The bread of God is He who cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."—John vi. 33. Again, "I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."—v. 35. What a beautiful expression! The Bread of Life! The support of goodness in the soul, which alone is true life! What a divine gift is this when the Lord Jesus gives the heavenly manna! He gives Himself! He is goodness itself, and wisdom itself! Where He is, there is heaven! "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men," "for he

satisfieth the thirsty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."—Psalm cvii. 19.

This manna was measured with an omer, the least of the chief Jewish measures, containing about six pints. Each head of a house was to gather sufficient for all in his household at the rate of an omer for a head.—v. 16. This would be sufficient taking one with another. So that "he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack."

How many important lessons crowd upon us, suggested by these divine arrangements. First, that heavenly good is not given in mass, but a little at a time. Day by day we eat, day by day we work. Day by day we conquer evils, day by day we grow in goodness. How illusive are the hopes and the dreams of the unpractical Christian! He defers to to-morrow the reception of that life which he deeply needs to-day. He must eat good food to work, but he feeds on dust, which is the serpent's meat. The food of angels is offered him in vain. He has bright visions of celestial feasts, but they are ever in the future. To-day, he neglects the divine command, and he pines, becomes daily feebler, loses at length the very appetite, and dies in the Wilderness.

"To-day attend the call divine ;
To-morrow never may be thine ;
Repent, ere 'tis too late."

This eternal law that every one must gather to-day the food of to-day, shows the indispensable necessity of daily prayer, of daily reading of the Holy Word. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." Sufficient also for the day is the good thereof. But we must gather it to-day. When we look on the numerous annual circles which the saw has laid bare in the trunk of a noble tree, what differences do we observe? Some of the rings of wood are full and clear, they tell of genial years, of sunny skies, and friendly showers; there are also, poor, thin, scarcely perceptible lines; these speak of bitter seasons, dry, arid, and chilly times, when the poor tree could scarcely make any wood, and it shows it may be the starved timber of fifty years before. The pinched lines tell of the bitter year, though long gone by. The judgment has come, and as the work was, so is the reward. The human soul is such a tree! It has its daily work to do, its daily growth to make. The neglect of to-day can never be fully made up. Other times may be truly spent, other states may be full, but each period of neglect will tell of us in the judgment. As the tree falleth so it lieth. Its entire condition will be the

result of our entire life. The neglect of to-day will appear as neglect, and hinder the noble proportions we might have assumed. O then let us go out and gather the manna of to-day! It is needed for our daily work and daily progress. Time is given, passes, is gone, and never returns.

But it is said it was a small round thing and sweet like wafers made of honey. Its smallness is indicative of its being only after all a very little of heavenly joy, a very slight portion which can be communicated to us. We think it great, but it is only a very little of what the angels feel. It is said to be round because the form of things are indicative of their nature. Things sharp correspond to things of truth. Truth is pointed like a sword or an arrow; but things round are representative of goodness. Goodness is round in all its operations, not angular. Truth is sharp and piercing, good is smooth and gentle. Truth is severe, often blaming and fighting. Good is courteous and kind. Therefore heavenly goodness is here represented by the manna being a round thing. It is said to be like wafers made of honey; because its wafer-like condition is expressive of its shallowness as yet. There were in the Israelitish sacrificial arrangements three kinds of prepared bread used in the services. There were the loaves; the cakes baked in a pan; and the wafers. These three were representative of the three degrees of heavenly goodness, that are received and felt in worship, and rendered again to the Lord in adoration by the angels of the three heavens, and in the three great degrees of the christian life. The loaves represent that full condition of heavenly goodness which is to be found in the highest state of christian life—that full state of heavenly love when a person glows with affection for the Lord above all things, when from this love he also glows with an affection for all truth that comes from the Lord, and when from the same love he glows with a love to use every opportunity for doing good. The cakes represent the good which a person does from truth; the wafers, the good of external obedience.

Let us faithfully walk then in the path of love and duty, and the sweet manna of heavenly blessing will be given. He who watches over our pilgrimage has said, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then would I soon have subdued thine enemies." "With honey out of the rock would I have satisfied thee, and fed thee with the finest of the wheat."

SERMON XVII.

THE BATTLE WITH AMALEK.

"But Moses' hands were heavy ; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon ; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side ; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun."—Exodus xvii. 12.

In considering the separate stages of this divine history, we have ever borne in mind that it is the divinely arranged programme of the stages through which the soul prepares for heaven.

In the letter it is the account of how the Israelites exchanged their slavery for freedom in their God-given land. In its spirit it is the history of how every man exchanges the slavery of sin for the liberty of truth and heaven. Hence, this divine account has a double charm, and a double worth.

In relation to the literal sense, it is of importance that we should understand it truly, and that we should be clearly convinced of its divine and veracious character, in order that it may be the base of the still more important spiritual history of our mental progress. It will then tell of the assaults we shall have to sustain, and of the victories we may hope to achieve.

And, in considering the subject in this light, you will remember, that in our discourse in relation to the gift of Manna, we endeavoured to point out the futility of some objections that had been urged against the divine history, under the supposition that the Wilderness through which the Israelites had to pass was an entirely uninhabitable desert, with food neither for man nor beast. We endeavoured to point out from the Sacred Scripture that it was a Wilderness containing parts most inhospitable, but where generally there was an abundance of pasture. There was a divine gift of food for man. The pastures of the Wilderness were enough for the cattle. The portion of the divine

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history before us tells us there was a great, powerful, and war-like nation there, which implies that ordinarily there were food, water, and fuel in the Wilderness even for a considerable population.

The Israelites had passed more than two months on their journey forward. They had arrived at a region where there were mines—copper mines, which we know from Egyptian history had been worked for hundreds of years by that people. Probably, they employed the inhabitants of the district, the Amalekites. Hence, the name of the district, “Rephidim,” which is the Hebrew word for beds, and here meant the beds of copper, the strata out of which that metal was dug throughout that district. The rocks thereabout are covered with inscriptions to the present day, written in hieroglyphics. The Israelites coming up this dreary pass distressed for water, and weary, were confronted by the allies of their taskmasters.

The Amalekites, the friends of the Egyptians, in their pay, engaged by them in the production of copper out of these beds, and enraged at what they had heard of the disasters which had occurred in Egypt, would stand ready to give Israel battle ; and as the divine history informs us, to crush, if possible, this crowd of fugitives.

In this way then we find that although a superficial notice of the divine scriptures may lead us to doubts and difficulties in connection with the letter, yet Lord Bacon’s aphorism is verified, “He who by a little learning is led to doubt, but who will give himself to a thorough research into the matters of divine truth comes round to full belief again.”

In studying the spiritual history which we do by penetrating through the letter, we will ask you first to adore that just and providential care which always tempers its proceedings to the strength of every one. When a person has begun to cast off the fetters of sin, when he has determined to live for heaven, when he will no longer be a bond-slave to error, and to evil, but will burst asunder the fetters that would hold him down to wrong and misery, although he seems to himself to make a great change, a tremendous change, yet the alteration can only be gradual.

We are not strong enough to fight at first against the subtler sins of the heart and soul, and therefore, for a time, the Lord takes care that we should have no enemies that would give us fierce battle, or that would be too strong for our spiritual efforts. It was to represent this that Israel proceeded without opposition

from the Red Sea to this comparatively advanced post in the Wilderness. They had accomplished about 120 miles. They had been journeying and resting for about two months, and as far as distance was concerned they might have been more than half way to the land of Canaan at this period, but they would have had to pass through the land of the Philistines, a fierce, obstinate, skilful and valiant people. They were unprepared, feeble in spirit, untrained, and must have turned back and died.

Precisely so is it with every soul that enters upon its spiritual pilgrimage. We have resolved to live for ever in goodness, a pure, a holy Christian life. We feel as if we were already made for heaven. There is much joy and pleasure ; we seem to have made an immense change, and feel as if all that is essential to our happiness had already been done. Our small progress seems a great progress to us ; though but little in the sight of God, to us it seems all in all. The time comes, however, for severer conflict. We have been maintained and strengthened in goodness. We have been fed a few times with the heavenly manna ; the dew of divine truth has come over the soul. When all this has comforted and cheered us, and caused us to know that we are making sure progress, that we are not uncared for, but are children of the King of Kings, that God our Father is our Saviour, our friend that "sticketh closer than a brother"—when we have thus been strengthened and confirmed, we are permitted to come into spiritual struggles of a deeper nature. In other words, Amalek stands in the way.

Amalek was an old nation, and one that had occupied very considerable portions of the Wilderness, almost from the Red Sea to the land of Canaan.

You will find as the divine history proceeds, that, at different passages relating to the various incidents of the history of Israel, sometimes Amalek is spoken of as in one place, and sometimes as in another, showing that they were an extensive nation, having settlements all the way along the portion of the Wilderness through which the Israelites had to pass, along the south of the land of Canaan, and even quite close to Jordan.

We have said that Amalek was an ancient nation. When Balaam is speaking of the circumstances that threatened Israel, he speaks of Amalek as being the chief of the nations, (Num. xxiv. 20.) You will find in the 14th chapter of the Book of Genesis, that in the struggle of Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, in which they carried off Lot, and were

afterwards pursued by Abram, it is said they were chased through the land of the Amalekites. Afterwards a portion of the family of Esau likewise took the name of Amalek, perhaps from settling in the very same district that had been occupied by the Amalekites of old.

But these people were more noticeable for their peculiar method of warfare. They came upon Israel when they thought they were in especial distress. When the people were weary and way-worn, and feeble, they assailed them with their whole force. You will find references to this habit in some other parts, but perhaps one of the most striking is that which is given in the 25th chapter of Deuteronomy, where it is said in the 17th and following verses, "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 hindmost of thee even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore, it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shall not forget it." In the 17th chapter of Exodus and sixteenth verse, it is said, that "the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

The subtle and insidious character of this people is likewise adverted to in some of the incidents that occur in other parts of the Israelitish history. It appears from the account of the death of Saul, which, you will recollect, is recorded as having taken place in two ways. In the last chapter of the first book of Samuel we are told that Saul called upon his armour-bearer to thrust him through. But afterwards in the first chapter of the succeeding book we are told that an Amalekite came and asked David to reward him because he had killed Saul. A knowledge of this insidious and murderous peculiarity of Amalek's mode of warfare, will assist us to harmonize both the letter and the spirit of these two accounts. It was to hang about, and when they met with the weary and wounded, when their victims were almost helpless, then to set about slaughtering them, and carrying out their malignant and fiendish purposes.

Now to recollect this peculiarity is especially important, when we come to think of the principles they spiritually represent, for you are quite aware that all the outward battles of the sacred history are the symbols of the spiritual struggles of the human soul.

“Blessed,” says the Psalmist, “be the Lord my Strength, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.” Equally so He who spoke as never man spoke, said, “I am come not to send peace upon earth, but a sword,”—the sword of divine truth, which is put into the hands of every one of us, that we may do battle against self and sin in all their varied forms. The warfare of a Christian is not outward warfare, but inward warfare against selfishness and sin. We have to extirpate all those lusts and passions which degrade the fallen heart of man, and which the Lord Jesus inspires us to fight against, and promises to give us power to overcome, when He says, “I will give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.”—Luke x. 19.

The spiritual Amalek is that inward subtle selfishness which coils itself up like a snake in the human heart; that which is meant by the asp in the words of the 91st Psalm, “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the asp; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet.”—v. 13. For even when a person has really begun to live the life of heaven, there is an inward selfishness, an inward faithlessness, an inward impurity and evil, which coils itself out of the way, which does not show itself openly, but remains hidden, as it were, in a secret place, and comes out when the soul is weak and weary. When we are faint and in trouble, that subtle spirit would lead us to despair and to sin. This hidden wickedness, like some malignant fiend would lead us when we are in a state of spiritual weakness to give up God, to give up heaven. This is what is meant by Amalek. This inward demon which whispers we can have no hope, no trust in God, no heaven-derived faith. It is this abhorrent selfishness, and the mode to overcome it that is represented in the Divine Word before us.

The Divine Word says, “I will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” No such hidden evil is to be spared for a moment. You remember how it happened with Saul; he spared Agag the Amalekite. He was commanded to go out and destroy Amalek root and branch. Instead of doing what the Lord told him, he spared the Amalekites, and especially the king, the representative of the inward rooted evil, the very pith and backbone, as it were, of the sin; and the result was that the Amalekites destroyed him. And this is precisely the condition of all war with Amalek. At all times man must kill his inward evil, or that inward evil will kill him. There can be no half work, a man must not compromise with sin, but he must carry

the war right into his heart and mind, and destroy the very pith and essence of it. He must do nothing in the sight of man that he would not do in the sight of God. This is carrying on unsparingly the war with Amalek.

The Divine Word tells us how to accomplish this.

First of all, Moses says unto Joshua, "Choose us out men, and go out and fight with Amalek; to-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand." "So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill." Moses in the spiritual sense, as we have oftentimes explained in this divine history, is representative of the LAW OF GOD in the soul; the confession that we ought to obey the divine will as the Lord commands. This becomes a conscience for the real Christian; a living law of God. He says to himself at all times, What does the Word say about this? and what he feels the Word says, is to him the law, that is, Moses with the rod in his hand. But he went up to the top of the hill. Now this is an exceedingly interesting and graphic description of what must take place in our spiritual warfare, for the hill is a representative of a holy state of heart, a loving state, lifted up towards the Divine Being. You will find a hill thus representative everywhere in the Word of God. Instance the first verse of the 121st Psalm, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." In the 7th verse of the 30th Psalm we find, "Thou hast made my mountain to stand strong." Not that the Lord has made some outward mass of earth to stand strong, but He makes our exalted love for Him to stand strong. It is of this the Word says again, "The hills shall flow with milk, and the mountain drop down with new wine."—Joel iii. 18. That is to say when our hearts are lifted up with love to the Lord, and charity towards our neighbour, the milk and new wine of heaven will flow down and give us courage, and the desire to instruct and bless others.

The Lord says to us in this divine history, you must go up on to the hill, you must not think of fighting simply from mere knowledge, or from yourselves, you must enter into the love of the Lord and of divine things. You must be united with the Lord Jesus Christ, and come up into a state of loving trust in Him, a loving confidence that He will not forsake you. When that is the case you will not only have Moses, but he will be on the top of the hill, and with the rod of his power in his hand.

Aaron and Hur supporting the hands of Moses represent truths on each side supporting the soul; truths of faith and truths of love.

We are told that as the contest continued Moses' hands sometimes became weak, and began to fall down, and that at other times they rose up, representative of the alternate feeling of rising towards the Lord, and weakness from human frailty. In the early stages of our religious life we cannot remain persistently in a state of faith and confirmation. Sometimes we are weak, weary, and almost dying, the hands go down. At other times we rise up in affection towards the Lord, we are then courageous and strong. Thus, as the arms of Moses rose up, it is said, "Israel prevailed, when they fell down Amalek prevailed."

And so it is written in our text, "But Moses' hands were heavy"—our hands are heavy when we have little affection. Just as we find that warmth makes things ascend so the warmth of inward love makes the soul rise up with joy. When we have but little affection the hands become weak and unsteady; when supported by love and faith they rise.

The hands of Moses, it is said, "were heavy, and they took a stone and put it under him." A **STONE** is spiritually symbolic of foundation truth—such truth as is in the letter of the Sacred Scriptures. In the letter, the Word forms foundation lessons, resting places, as it were, for the soul. A person may have an idea, but while it remains an idea only, it is fleeting, and will pass away, but if his idea is in accordance with Divine Truth and he finds a text for it in the letter of the Word, the idea becomes steady, it rests upon a "Thus saith the Lord," as a foundation. There is then a steady rock on which his soul can repose. Hence, our Lord Jesus in the closing of His divine Sermon on the Mount says, "He who heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will tell you unto what he is like; he is like unto a man that built his house upon a rock, and the winds blew, and the rains descended, and the floods came and beat upon that house, and it fell not, because it was founded on a rock." Now, in putting the stone under Moses, and letting him sit upon it, there was figured to us the necessity for supplying the mind with the divine instruction contained in the letter of the Word. We should not feel, but know, on the sure declaration of Holy Writ abundantly supplied, that, "It is not the will of our Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." The suffering waverer, who scarcely knows whether the Lord cares for him or not, should often have his soul strengthened with passages which assure him that God is

Love. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Passages like this form the stone upon which Moses can sit. These promises of love can be seen to be so plain, that the novice, the earliest thinker of divine things can see and understand them. When we think we are lost and hope begins to fail, let us read the truths of redemption and learn that the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. And the Father of Heaven will then say of us, "My son who was dead is alive again, and who was lost is found."

These truths form the rock of heaven, place this under Moses, and then he will sit firmly. Moses' hands will sometimes become heavy, but put this stone under him, with Aaron on one side, and Hur on the other. With love and faith lifting up his hands Israel will defeat Amalek down to the very setting of the sun. The soul will completely triumph over this fatal evil. And, now, finally, my beloved hearers whenever you are harassed by discouragement and despair, take this course, go up to the top of the hill, look to the Saviour for strength, take Aaron and Hur with you. Let them take a stone from the Divine Word and do you sit upon it. Say, Here I rest, this is from the eternal God. This is the rock of my salvation, nothing can shake me. Here, I will put my trust. My Friend, my Saviour, my Redeemer—he has the love that will save me He has the power that will prevail over the evil. He shall reign for ever and ever. In such case Amalek will perish and die away even to the going down of the sun. So the soul will have rest. You can then lie down in peace and confidence and say, All is right. He has given his beloved sleep; my troubles are passed. "Bless the Lord, Oh, my soul! and all that is within me bless his Holy Name."

SERMON XVIII.

JETHRO'S ADVICE TO MOSES TO CHOOSE RULERS.

"Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens."—Exodus xviii. 21.

We are here called to witness a most interesting event. We find Moses after having been absent for a considerable time, and having passed through a series of most momentous adventures, again returned to his original place of departure. Thence he had set out with the charge of freeing the Israelites from bondage by the command of the Lord, and there he returned again. Almost at the very spot where the Divine Being had appeared to him and promised him what would happen, there he had brought the children of Israel to rest near the mountain of God. There had come his father-in-law, who had doubtless heard of the marvellous adventures through which he had passed.

We have pointed out, when noticing these circumstances on a former occasion, that Jethro is not simply called "*a* priest of Midian," but "*the* priest of Midian," a term which is probably equivalent to the ruler of the Church, or of that description of religion that prevailed all over Midian. In some ancient manuscripts the term for this father-in-law, or at least for his position, is the prince of Midian, and probably he was priest and prince. In ancient nations, the binding principle was religion, and the princes were the embodiment of the religion. In this instance, the priest, or the chief priest, and the prince are probably one.

Moses having brought the children of Israel thus far, almost as we have said to the very spot where he had received his mission to break down the power of Pharaoh, there Jethro his father-in-law came to meet him, and they conversed together, and asked each other, it is said, of their welfare. We can clearly imagine how interesting must that conversation have been. What each would

have to recount as having happened during the interval of absence. Moses would relate all the wonders by which his people had been set free; the manner in which the proud tyrant of Egypt had been troubled; at length, the utter overthrow of the Egyptian host in the Red Sea; the way in which the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud had led them from time to time; how the manna came down; and how they conquered Amalek. We can hardly imagine anything more interesting, anything more deeply impressive or touching than what would happen in the conversation between these remarkable men. But now another great stride in Israelitish progress was to be made. From a multitude they were to become a nation.

They had just recently had a struggle with a bitter foe. They had felt the need and were to learn the power of order.

They had arrived at complete rest, and then had spread themselves out in the plain just at the foot of the mount of God, completely delivered, but finding themselves only a great multitude not yet well arranged or well and satisfactorily governed. After being delivered from the outward foe, now came the time for being delivered also from inward danger. For an immense multitude like that with no regulations or order, must have been in the greatest possible difficulty, until such arrangements could be made as would reach the circumstances of every man and point out what was needed to be done for the sake of order.

Now this succeeding operation, the transformation of this immense multitude of individuals into a nation, is the subject placed before us by our text, and the difference between a people and a nation is this. People is a word that denominates men in their individual condition, every man being a portion of the people. But an immense number of individuals is no more a nation until they are placed under regulations of divine order, than an immense number of grains of sand is a rock. A promiscuous multitude becomes a nation by law and order. Order is heaven's first law. Individual people are like the atoms of the human body, order brings them into the beauty and strength of the human form. The perception of this law, the placing of it before Moses, the arrangements that resulted from it, and the constitution of the nation are the subjects brought before Moses by Jethro.

The people were two millions in number, uninstructed, brought out of a long and depressing condition of slavery, with little intelligence, and little perception of their true wants, or of true order. Jethro places the difficulty properly when he says, "Thou wilt wear away and all this people with thee." It would be just

so in any similar case ; and hence the necessity for order being immediately introduced and upheld, so that men capable of laying hold of true principles of regulation and government, and sound-minded, so as to apply such principles conscientiously, should be chosen for just and orderly government ; and thus this mass of individuals be changed into a well organized nation. This was done. Moses took Jethro's counsel, made the choice of proper men, placed all in good and sound arrangement, and therefore provided for their true well-being.

We learn from this circumstance the importance of orderly arrangement. Orderly arrangement is the framework for good everywhere ; whether it be in a nation, in a town, or in a church. Look at that glorious result, a well-ordered nation. Every one can pursue his aims and his business in peace. Trade, commerce, learning, the beautiful arts of social life, comfort, and confidence all flourish. As soon as intelligent men are selected and placed where their intelligence can be serviceable to the rest, orderly well-being at once prevails. So it is that nations are compacted together, and all goes on with ease in good order. There are some unfortunate people that suppose they would be far better off, if they had nobody to govern them—their own will, their own caprice being the only law which they willingly obey—but if such persons were left to themselves, the world would become a mere mass of struggling self-seeking disquieting people, and would ultimately rush to universal ruin. The weak would have none to protect them. The stronger members of society would oppress the rest. The universal feeling would soon call for some strong hand to repress disorder. By orderly arrangement, men of mind are selected, who have seen what truth requires and are able to bring it about.

The government of good men, is the government of God through men. Hence Jethro says, "Hearken now unto me, for I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee."

National government secures for millions advantages unspeakable and innumerable ; hence, rebellion is a deplorable crime. What the Lord teaches, true rulers will perceive, and what the Lord teaches them to perceive, they will hold out to other men. And then though they are the persons who are rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, rulers of tens, it is not really they who govern, it is the Lord who governs by them, as is expressed in those beautiful words which Gideon addressed to the Israelites, when they came to ask him to rule over them, he said, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my sons rule over you, but the Lord shall rule over you."

Such is true government, and such true government makes happiness in a nation, and brings success and prosperity to its individuals. This truth is the divine teaching of the text.

The Word lays down the qualities of all rulers who have authority from the Lord to govern. First, it is said, they shall be able men. The word here given "able" in the Scripture means firm-minded. It does not refer so much to their capabilities as to their strength of character. Next, it is said, they must fear God. They must be men of truth, hating covetousness.

In the first quality assigned to men who shall be rulers, we see one of the very first elements of all true progress. Nothing is more injurious to a nation, to a community or to himself, than vacillation in a man—that easy, careless, reckless condition of mind, which says one thing to-day and another to-morrow, which has no firmness, no grasp of purpose, no solidity of character, but is perpetually pushed about by whomsoever will take the trouble. A person of this class is a perpetual source of weakness and distress. The very first attribute of a person who will go rightly and do good is firmness. The true man will intelligently adopt a principle, and then strongly carry it out. There are some men, and they are always men of an unsuccessful, weak and wavering character, that seem to have no earnestness about them ; a lackadaisical class that are continually displaying a feebleness of character, that have no principle or scarcely any, and hardly know whether principle is necessary or not. There are men that neither in the government of themselves, nor in the government of anything they have to do can possibly have any success. They are just the same as those little children who sow a grain of corn to day, and to-morrow dig it up to see what progress it has made. Such is not the condition of any person who will really work through life successfully, or govern successfully. Life is not a mere reckless, careless, condition of things, the world is the land of law, and he who will succeed must discover the laws of success in relation to the object he has in view and firmly carry them out. We must be stout men, able men, and firm men, men that have a meaning in life, men that do not expect to be mere shuttlecocks, but that may be trusted to do something,—to have a mission, and who will earnestly strive to carry it out. Such are the men who are serviceable to themselves, to their families, to the world, and the Church.

The next quality is expressed in the words such as "fear

God." We must not suppose that being firm-minded means being insolent men. On the contrary, men of the firmest, noblest mind may be men of the deepest humility. Their reverence for God, and not for themselves or for the opinions of short-sighted mortals is the source of their strength. They bow themselves before the Lord to ask Him to teach them, but when He has taught them they are as firm as a rock to carry out His divine will. They fear God. A man may in this respect be as strong as a giant when he feels he is acting by the direction of the Lord, but gentle as a child in all points not incompatible with this. The two qualities not only can go together, but will go together in a right-minded, earnest, loving champion of his God and Saviour. He will ever be humble and meek, as far as his own views go, but firm as a rock in all that is right, in all that obedience to the Divine Law demands. Such are these two qualifications—firmness tempered by the fear of God.

The third qualification is "men of truth." Whenever there is carelessness of truth there is weakness and disorder. Yet how large a mass are they in the world who seem to have no adequate conception of the infinite worth of Truth. Millions seem like Pilate; they come and say, "What is truth?" and then, like Pilate, before they can get an answer they go away, not caring anything about it. Yet love of truth is that on which all progress depends, love of truth is the pivot on which salvation depends, progress depends, heavenly peace depends, everything depends. The Apostle in describing the wicked says, "They received not the love of truth that they might be saved."—2 Thess. ii. 10. It is a sad reflection, especially when we see such multitudes going here and there careless of the truth, to meditate on their lot in the world of truth, where the light of truth lays all things bare. He who has never asked himself in the presence of the Lord, Who is the true God? What is true life? What is right for time and for eternity? will some day or other be of that class of which our Lord speaks when He says, "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

But, on the other hand, every loving man having an eternal affection for the truth, will be continually asking himself—is this opinion of mine right; is this view which seems to be true really so? Such a man, if he does not get the truth to-day will

get it in due time. It is certain to come to him, whether he be in high or low degree, and whether in a Christian or a heathen nation. Divine light will come over his soul, and he will be in that class of which it is said by our Lord, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

This grand qualification, "men of truth" is that which fortifies the soul in its individual case, and which fortifies the man if he be uplifted to be a governor amongst men, and makes him fit to be placed in that position in a nation. Men of truth, hating lucre—that is to say, hating all manner of bribery: everything that springs from selfishness and love of self, or love of power, or anything that would draw him aside from truth and justice. Hating lucre—going straight on in the course of truth and right, for this is the rule of the Lord. He—the man of truth—is he who would no more go aside to what is merely interested, self-seeking, or which panders to the lusts and passions of avarice or worldliness either in himself or others, than he would voluntarily destroy his own life—hating lucre, hating covetousness.

Acting upon this sacred principle we should love the arrangements of our nation; at all times we should delight to obey the regulations of sound and just rulers; at all times we should be ready to sustain the authority of law and order, so that truth may reign and goodness may progress throughout our nation, and by its means throughout the world. Then amid the general security we may rejoice in the government of peace that results from the sovereignty of goodness and wisdom from the Lord.

A well-ordered nation is also the representative of a well-ordered mind. There ought to be, and there will be, after we have advanced in the regenerate life, an ordination and arrangement of principles in the soul.

We have forsaken sin as Israel left Egypt. We have had our battle with interior sin—our Amalek, and conquered again. Then there comes a time when it is necessary to regulate the mind, to think we must not remain satisfied with simply being generally religious, for that is precisely the condition that is represented by Moses doing all the business himself alone. A man may be generally religious, may wish that such a general law may govern him, as Moses governed the whole of the Israelites, without applying religion to the details of life.

But that is not enough. If a person would obtain the blessing of the Lord, he must have principles for all his pursuits.

He must think what that is which ought to regulate him in relation to his religious views. Will he be quite satisfied with simply going from time to time to divine worship and taking a general interest in it, or will he adopt some principles in relation to it? He must ask himself what he will do for other persons? Has he time or talent to assist in Sunday schools, or other useful works? What can he do for his own spiritual advancement? What principles shall govern his home, his friendship, his business? When he inquires well, what is right in these matters, it is just selecting principles, as the Israelites selected governors. His principles must be firm, they must be humble, learned from the Word of God, "men of truth." He must seek a perception of what is right. He must ask himself what he has to do in all things to be in harmony with the Divine Will.

The rulers of thousands are the chief principles of the Church. There is nothing so vast as the Church. It belongs to true progress to remember that these principles are his highest concerns. The laws that govern a man's life, as to his highest interior duties, both for heaven and earth, are his soul's highest rulers. They are the rulers of thousands.

The rulers of hundreds refer to the government of the soul in relation to society, to his neighbourhood, to his nation; how he will act in everything that has relation to civil law and order so as to perform his duty to society. He will avoid both prejudice and lucre in his investigations, and obey only truth and duty. He will examine carefully what is given him to be done, and he will easily discover it in the Word. He will "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" and do this for the Lord's sake. And such principles he will create governors over his hundreds. In relation to his business there are governors of fifties. He has some occupation, some pursuit, some work in which he takes a warm interest, and in that case he will conscientiously regulate his mind according to the divine requirements, doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with his God. We know that there are a vast number who neglect all this, who have no principles, who get as much as they possibly can, and give as little as they are able. But "what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" He is a curse to everybody. He is a curse to his family, a curse to those connected with him in fellowship or in business, and a curse to himself. Let him choose principles like the men spoken of in our text and all will be well. Choose men that are men of

truth, choose principles of right. As you would have others do to you, so do to them. Remember that this world is but a mere passing stage, a mere nursery in which you are capable of growing, and being nurtured so as to fill a place in the Lord's kingdom.

Finally, allow me to remind you once more, that, nations exist and become great only from law and order. When these exist and are sacredly maintained, all the manifold blessings and beauties of social life manifest themselves and multiply. Each man's home is his castle. Each sits under his own roof and invents, creates, and enjoys in peace. A nation becomes a man on a grander scale: the legislature—the heart; the executive government and great employers—the shoulders, arms and chest; the rest of the nation forming the remainder of the body of the state in multiplied diversity and beautiful order, doing the Lord's work and enjoying the Lord's blessing in ten thousand thousand ways.

Would you see a mere people, then study the roaming tribes of the desert, though even there, there is a nation in its smallest form—a tribe. Would you see a nation, then turn to the civilized states of Europe, or America, or to Great Britain, the chief of them all, and contrast the security, the loveliness, the convenience, the magnificence, and the abundance which reign in the one, with the uncertainty, the bareness, and the meanness of life in the other, and you will be convinced of the importance of that wondrous result of law-ordered life—a nation.

The same contemplation will disclose the enormous wickedness of the sin of rebellion: a sin which incloses in itself multiplied murder, wide-spread robbery, and every human villainy. Where rulers have substituted despotism for law, and gagged discussion, when they persist in rejecting remonstrance, and are themselves stifling the nation, to whom liberty is life, until no reasonable hope of change remain, then resistance to iniquity in high places becomes faithfulness to God. This is not rebellion, it is patriotism. But in all other cases rebellion is regarded in Scripture as on a par with witchcraft, as wickedness of the foulest kind.

Let us then in our capacity of citizens ever regard faithfulness to law as our abiding duty, so shall we become in the language of the Word, "a great and understanding people."

But to secure this your soul also must be like a well-ordered nation, in which every subject does his duty, and righteousness rules over all. Then "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."

SERMON XIX.

OBEDIENCE, OUR DUTY AND OUR WISDOM.

"You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine."—Exodus xix. 4, 5.

When we seriously understand that the Israelitish journey is in reality a sacred picture of the journey of the soul by regeneration to heaven, we have got the key to an immense variety of most important and most beautiful truths. We have arrived at a stage in the journey through the Wilderness that brings this truth home to the thoughtful mind, and that will prepare us to appreciate it in some respects which otherwise would have escaped our notice. The Israelites had made their way step by step, overcoming the difficulties of the journey and mastering the opposition that had been brought against them to the very foot of Mount Horeb,—the place you will remember that Moses set out from in order to accomplish his mission, and thus to lead the people from their Egyptian bondage. So far a circle of operations has been completed. The Lord's appearance, by an angel, to Moses; Moses having made his way into Egypt, delivered himself of His mission, exercised the authority by which he had proclaimed the Israelites were to be set free, and actually led them out to freedom. Then returning with them to the Mount of God safe and sound, to reflect, as it were, on all the proceedings through which they had gone, and to devote themselves anew to the Lord. It is at this period that these divine words were uttered. The Lord says, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians," you have further seen how I have led you; "how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself, now, therefore—

and here is the divine result to which the Lord draws their attention,—“Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.”

The first reflection which we would fain impress upon the minds of all is, that these wonderful things were manifestly done in order to induce the Israelites to be obedient to the Lord, and to prepare them for the ten commandments.

It is one of the most serious and fatal errors that have afflicted the Christian Church, to imagine, that, there are any means whatever, under the name of any religion whatsoever, that dispense with obedience to the divine commandments either on earth or in heaven. We say that there are not ANY SUCH MEANS.

You will find according to the Divine Word, as indeed we may see from the very nature of things, such obedience to the divine commandments is the one essential of real improvement and happiness from first to last.

Every one confesses that in Paradise man had to obey. Those who suppose that religion ever since that period has been a sort of machinery by which forgiveness can be obtained, and obedience done without, still profess that in Paradise God laid down the law to man, and said the day that he disobeyed he would surely die; but if he obeyed, that he would live and eat of the Tree of Life and be happy for ever. They suppose, however, that obedience as an essential to salvation then ceased.

But instead of the law of obedience being confined to this period of man's existence and ceasing with our first parents, what do we find immediately followed? When Cain had offended again in a deeper sin than that of Adam, the Divine Words to him were, “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door.”—Gen. iv. 7. Precisely the very law that was first given. “If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?” whatever thy father may have done, whatever may have been thy condition up to this time, if thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted, and this divine law is contained throughout. Whenever prophet spake, this was the burden of his speech,—Obey the Lord thy God; do His commandments, and it shall be well with thee. “Oh 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.”—Deu. 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."—Deu. vi. 24, 25.

In the New Testament, at the time when it is supposed by many there was a new system of religion given, as to obedience, as well as in regard to hope and redemption, and that the Lord Jesus came to set aside this law of the divine commandments, the very first address the Lord Jesus gave in His Sermon on the Mount, states and enforces the same essential law of obedience. "Blessed are the poor in spirit : for their's is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God." "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." "Whosoever shall break the least of these my commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the 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. 3, 8, 19, 20. This truth is reiterated by the Saviour again and again, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"—Luke vi. 46. "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. It is the same throughout the Apostolic teaching. Paul says, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God."—1 Cor. vii. 19.

The divine book of Revelation is equally clear in its teachings. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life ; and that they may enter in through the gates into the city." This obedience to divine law is such in the very nature of things as to be indispensable. There could not be a heaven without obedience to every part of the sacred law of the divine commandments. It would be totally impossible. It would be just like attempting to make white out of black and blue. The thing could not be done. Therefore when the Lord had brought Israel up to this point of their deliverance, and they were free, He then proceeds to remind them, that all this has been done to enable them to keep His commandments. That they might be brought into a state, in which, the divine commands might be made lovingly, thoroughly, the laws of their affections and their lives. "Now, therefore, if

ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people : for all the earth is mine."

How completely diverse is the whole of this from what is commonly called the "scheme" of salvation—and very properly called a "scheme"—a plan of salvation. It is not the divine outgoing of infinite wisdom and the Lord's lesson of salvation, but it is A SCHEME, a thing of human ingenuity—a sort of spiritual quibble, which tends to divert those who adopt it from all real progress in goodness and truth.

We are bold to say, the Lord came not to give us any plans instead of the obedience we owe him, but to bring us to such a stage of the regenerate life, that His commandments would be the very joy of our hearts, and to break them our greatest sorrow. To a truly heavenly-minded man it is a peculiar pleasure to have the happiness of doing the divine laws, because it flows from love itself, and from goodness itself. This is the great object of the lesson before us. But, perhaps, some one will say, do you imagine that a person who has been living in sin all his life, but who repents and is converted, can all at once step out of his former condition into a state of perfect obedience to the Lord Jesus, his Lord? Certainly not. That is not the requirement of the King of Heaven. The person who has been brought out of sin and wickedness in the first state of his regenerate life, striving to quit all evil, is just like the Israelites when they were willing to quit their house of bondage, and go out in haste. But such persons are always very feeble, ready to fall, liable to be brought into a state of jeopardy and danger again. But the Lord looks upon them as they are, "His tender mercies are over all His Works." He takes them under His guidance. He breaks down their dangers for them. He says, "See what I did to the Egyptians." A young convert is not left to fight his own way out of sin, the Lord fights it for him. If a man had to struggle altogether alone against his own passions and lusts, just as they are, he might as wisely expect to be delivered and brought into an angelic state, as a man might expect on the shores of a rough sea to quell the waves by saying, "Thus far shall ye go, and no farther." Such power belongs not to man, it belongs only to the Omnipotent. But then the law of the Omnipotent is that of the God of love, who desires every one of His children to become an angel. He is infinitely watchful in His glorious character of Jehovah Jesus the Saviour. You will remember He took a new name when He

appeared to the Israelites ; He says, " I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as God Almighty ; but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them." But this name Jehovah, **HE WHO WILL BE**, reveals to you the Omnipotent, the Divine Love—our Friend, our Saviour, our Redeemer. He can control our passions, He can remedy our evils, He can deliver us from sin, He can redeem us and He does. And when we come to the Red Sea of difficulty He breaks through for us. He carries before His children the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day. And then, He says, before they encounter anything else, " You have seen what I did to the Egyptians." I struck down their power. I helped you to overcome those great forces. " I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself." Do not forget I shall be with you in all your troubles, and shall be with you even until you arrive in heaven. This is the first lesson that the Divine Love gives in our text. A man can overcome by divine help the evils that would break him down, by remembering what the Lord has done already, and relying on Him for the future.

The next thing that the Lord tells men to remember is, how He bare them on eagles' wings.

And, here, in passing, allow me to point out what is a constant and distinguishing mark of the Divine Word. There is always so much exact truth in the letter, that it affords a firm basis for a man to have confidence in, that it is the truth of the eternal God, given to immortal man. All, therefore, should beware of undervaluing the letter of the Word. It is the lowest step of the divine ladder, but it is divine. If divine truths were not brought so low that a child could understand them, and that the exactest scientific enquiry might be satisfied of their literal correctness, there would be no satisfactory basis on which we could rest in making our progress upwards. But, there is always so much of variation from literal truth, even in the letter, as to teach us that the letter is not the whole of the Word of God, but that there is something higher and inner. You know it was not literally true that the Lord brought them out of Egypt on eagles' wings, and therefore, the statement (as we have intimated is the case throughout the letter of the Word) here teaches us, that the Lord's words have a higher meaning. There are spirit and life in them, as well as letter.

The Word of God in this respect is precisely like the person of man. A man is, generally speaking, covered with clothing, but his face and hands are exposed, so as to enable us to see that

the clothes are not the man. Even the body itself, although it is usually accounted a clothing for the soul, yet in the features of the face, the soul itself, is as it were, disclosed, shewing us that there is something still nobler and grander within. We are told in our text that the Lord brought the people of Israel on eagles' wings, and elsewhere there is a reiteration of the same statement, in order to show us, that in our regenerate life, which the journey of the Israelites represented, we are not only brought step by step, following the Lord in our daily thoughts and works, but we are taught to think of things far more elevated and divine, for this is what is represented by eagles' wings.

Birds in the economy of nature, and in the correspondences of the Holy Word, are the symbols of THOUGHTS, because these are like mental birds, they are spiritual powers which can rise up to far loftier flights than the other parts of man's nature. By them man can see widely around. In the Sacred Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, you will find frequent references to this correspondence of birds. In Deut. xxxii. 11, we read, "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 did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Precisely in the same way, it is said, concerning the soul, in the 103rd Psalm, "He reneweth thy youth like the eagle's," and in Isaiah xl. it is said, "They who wait on the Lord shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." And when the Lord describes the character of religion, He says, "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. In the same way, in the last portion of the Book of Revelations, we read, that the Revelator saw one standing in the sun, who said to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather yourselves to the supper of the great God."

It is said, then, the Lord bare them along on the wings of eagles, to teach us, that, in our regeneration, He desires that we should enter into grand things of thought. The eagle is a bird of noble flight ; it is not like the sparrow or the owl, to which man in some other states of his spiritual life is compared, as for instance, in the Psalms ; but it is a bird of grand plumage, of magnificent flight, that can go towards the sun far more loftily than many other birds, and such mental eagles does the Lord

desire all His children to be. He wishes them not only to be obedient, walking in the divine way, but TO THINK, to have magnificent ideas, to dwell upon what He, the Lord Himself, is ; what His wisdom is, what the glorious arrangements of the angelic states are. This is to mount up with wings like eagles.

There are some people who shrink from daring to think, who imagine that to think of the future, to conceive what the higher and inner features and truths of religion are, and ought to be, will be going against the Divine Will. Why, it is the very purpose of the Divine Will ; the Lord wishes His people to think, He endeavours to provoke them to do so, to stir them up as it is very beautifully said in the passage which we have referred to in Deut. xxxii. 32. He is Himself like a divine eagle, stretching out its wings, and inviting His servants to follow. He displays resplendent truths, and excites us to perceive and receive them. He says, "As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings : so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him."

He comes, and, like a divine eagle, stirs up the nest of human thought, when, by permitting some perplexity, He stimulates us to think, He stirs up the appetite for healthy intellectual progress. This divine eagle flutters over her young with unutterable tenderness, spreadeth abroad her wings, unfolds truth in its higher, grander proportions, and allures and expands the rising intellect, aiding it in its flight, until it enjoys visions of divine light once quite undreamt of. So the Lord alone does lead him, and there is no strange god with him.

The Divine Teacher comes when we find a difficulty in some part of the Word, a difficulty in religious states, a difficulty in ascertaining something of the divine providence. These are the very things by which the Lord undertakes to stir us up. He acts precisely in relation to the soul as He does to the body. He could give to every man the power of having plenty without work ; He could make it an easy thing for every person to recline on a bank of roses, with luscious fruits descending into his mouth, and enabling him to exist and subsist, with nothing to do, but simply to indulge in sensual life. But that is not the purpose of the Divine Being. He intends to make us men and women. He intends us to exist in grand ideas, and in the performance of glorious uses. Suppose this had been a world in which there was naturally nothing to do, in which, spiritually there was nothing to do ; no trouble of thinking about anything

no trouble about learning anything ; no trouble in overcoming difficulties ; it would not be a world which would make men of us, it would be simply to make us great masses of self-indulgence, without having those exalted powers which are God-like. Therefore, the Lord induces us to become like Him, loving, wise, active, useful, grand ; happy in the general happiness, grand by the contemplation of His sublime wonders ; glorious beings, that we may mount up with wings like eagles, run and not be weary, walk and never faint. That is the lesson which He reminds us of in our text. "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."

And, now, what is to be done ? Are we not to obey, because we have been made grandly wise ? Are we not to carry out the Divine Will, because our sins have been encountered as the Egyptians were, and our fetters have been broken like those of the Israelites ? Assuredly we are. Hence the Lord says, If you will obey me, and if you will keep my covenant you shall live in sweet communion with me. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant,"—"Keep His covenant," what a beautiful expression ! It is, as it were, God and man taking hold of hands. This word covenant is expressive, as we find it in our own language. It is made out of two French words, "Con," and "venant," coming together, and it represents the Lord coming to us, and our going to Him. And this enables us to walk by the divine help. These two things teach us outward obedience, and inward conjunction. "If ye will obey my words indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." You shall become so full of love, of goodness, of wisdom, of every excellence, that no class of men, no nation, no people, no power can for a moment be represented as equal to that which would grow out of such Christian heavenly minds. One of our poets has said, and we all feel it to be the truth—

"An honest man 's the noblest work of God."

But one who is interiorly honest, one who is thoughtfully loving, who is honest to God by loving Him with all his heart ; is not only a peculiar treasure to the Lord, but is the treasure of treasures to himself ; he has heaven itself within him, he has the true essence of all happiness on earth.

SERMON XX.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

"I am the Lord thy God, who has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—Exodus xx. 2.

The ten commandments are the laws of Heaven brought down to earth. When they were delivered, the Israelites were all assembled on a remarkable plain at the foot of Mount Horeb—a plain which is said to be about twelve miles long, visible from the top of the mountain, and where we can conceive the whole two millions of the people gathered, and expectant, their tents arranged in divine order, and they themselves waiting and watching for the proclamation of the Divine Will. It must not be forgotten, that the famous mountain, "the Mount of God" as it is called, was the spot whence Moses set out to accomplish the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. It was there, at that very mountain, where the Divine appearance, by means of an angel, was presented in the burning bush; there where Moses received his mission to go and face the despotic monarch of Egypt. All the circumstances of that wondrous history by which the pride of Pharaoh was humbled, and the powers of his kingdom broken, and by which his down-trodden slaves were brought out, all these had passed; and now the redeemed people, their 600,000 men or thereabouts, with their wives and children, were all present. We may conceive the thought of the leader of Israel as he looked on the great host to be, "I have thus far accomplished my mission; Lord, now what is there to be said to these people?" and we find that the answer to the expectation of the whole host and the leader, was the giving of the very best and highest of all gifts, the counsel of the King of kings in His ten commandments. It was as though He had said, "Now

that the power of the tyrant is broken, now that the march of the desert has thus far been accomplished, now that you are prepared for a new national life, the very highest blessing of all that I can give you—the pledge, the soul, and the sum of all your after prosperity is contained in these divine commandments, written upon the two tables of stone. If you will love them, and be governed by them, you will be happy through all your career, and you will learn how angels are happy in the kingdom of heaven.”

Such are the meditations that offer themselves to contemplative minds, while thinking upon the wondrous event which is here recorded. God gave to the Israelites principles of action, these were the highest gift. The more we ponder it, the more we shall find it true, that it is not in the accidents of outward birth, dignity, or fortune, not in outward blessings of any kind that people become happy, but in carrying out holy and virtuous principles. How often are men deceived, who imagine they are doing the best for their children, if they absorb themselves as much as possible in toiling and striving to heap up riches, so that they can accumulate vast sums of money for them—thousands for each child, in order that it may never need to work, or obey the ordinary regulations of useful members of society—thinking that, thus, they will place their offspring in the way of being completely happy. No such thing. The gifts of good counsel, of true religion, of self-denial, of intellectual treasures, and a Christian example, exciting them to follow the Lord, and to take as a guide through life the divine rule, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,”—these are better than thousands of gold and silver, better than the broadest lands, or the grandest possessions. These principles will procure enough of comfort, and of well-being in this life for our real requirements, and they will form an imperishable wealth in the soul, gold and silver, and precious stones which angels acknowledge, and which will brighten and bless, and pass current in the realms of eternal peace. And so, you see, the Lord, in the chapter before us, does not give to the people of Israel any of the extensions of wealth, but He gives them these divine laws as the highest mark of His love—as though He had said,—Take these, love them, and act upon them, and they will make you a prosperous nation, a wise and an understanding people; Israel on earth placed in the land that flows with milk and honey, and at length the Israel of heaven.

But, if we look a little more closely at the spiritual signification

of this same fact, we shall see its important bearing in a still more interesting light than before. All nature is a sublime book of symbols, types, or correspondences. In this language of correspondence, a mountain is the symbol of highest goodness. It is thus that it suggests itself to us even in creation, and it is thus that you will find it constantly appearing in the Word. In nature, a mountain suggests this to the contemplative mind of one who advances up its sides, and observes its majestic grandeur as it rears itself up above the plains and valleys. You enjoy the deep peace that is surrounding it, and, on its top, feel as though you were in the presence of God Himself. It rises up above the mists and fogs of the lower atmosphere, and introduces us, as it were, into the very presence of the sun. It seems to realize the words of Goldsmith—

“Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Why it almost itself suggests what the Divine Word declares, “Thy righteousness is like the great mountains ; and thy judgments are a great deep.”—Psalm xxxvi. 6. And again, in Psalm lxxii. “The mountains shall bring peace.” So they do,—even to all who thoughtfully, and reverently regard the things of nature, and while they behold the beauties of the world say,—My Father made them all. “The mountains shall bring peace.” Mountains are thus the symbols of the love of God, and, therefore, when God from His love to the people, and from His love to us, gave His commandments for regeneration and peace, He did so from a mountain. For the same reason our Lord, when He came upon earth, and commenced to give His divine maxims peace, wisdom and love, in His first sermon, it was on a mountain. It is said in Matt. v., that Jesus “seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them.” The mountain was a symbol of the infinite love from which He spoke ; of His desire to make His people pure, and, therefore, happy ; of His wisdom as the wisdom of infinite affection, which desires that men should live angelically on earth, and hereafter be angels in heaven.

It is precisely the same with relation to man. A mountain is the symbol of that holy feeling of reverence for the Lord, and for all that comes from Him, that supreme love to Him above all things, that towers up in the Christian soul above everything earthly, as the mountain stands above the plains around—that

kisses the skies as it were—that penetrates the highest atmosphere, and there catches the heavenly influences, and brings them down to enrich and to bless. Mountains are in reality the sources of everything that is good upon the earth.

The earth would not in the slightest degree be fertile, if it were not that first of all the mountain sides are lifted up and then being played upon by the wind, and the rain, and the other atmospheric changes, they thereby become disintegrated. The little mountain rills take down the fertilizing soil, and form the fruitful stratum of our valleys. All the blessings of an abundant harvest are the result, first, of these majestic preparations which the mountains make. Our rivers, too, rise in the mountains; so that mountains in their nature, and in their use in the Word of God, are the holy symbols of celestial love.

Moses, therefore, got his mission in the mountain; and, when it had been so far carried out, that the people were brought into full freedom, and enabled, as it were, to say,—Now we have been delivered Lord, but tell us what is necessary to make us happy, then the Lord gave His commandments from the same mountain, as though He would say,—This is my highest gift: this is what must be done for you to be happy: these are the indispensable things; walk according to them, and then you will have earth's highest good, and heaven's everlasting peace.

But there are various particulars connected with these divine commandments, which are exceedingly interesting and instructive. First, the commandments are ten. There has been some difficulty in arranging them so as to make out that they are ten, yet, with attention, we may see the divisions, and in Deuteronomy there is said to be ten. "And having declared unto you his covenant, which he recommended you to perform, in ten commandments, and he wrote them on two tables of stone," (Deut. iv. 13,) thus, clearly teaching that they ought to be divided into ten, and that they were given upon two tables of stone. Before the Reformation the commandments were divided as we divide them, in the New Church Liturgy. Some of the Reformers, however, altered that arrangement. Their mode of division was adopted in the English Church—making of the first commandment, two; a very short one of the first part, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and forming the remainder of the same commandment into a distinct one. In the New Church division we have restored the order of the commandments to what it was before. The two parts plainly relate to the same thing: namely, the worship of the one Lord, and not the worshipping of anything else. Making those

which had been two, in the English Church, into one, necessitated the making of the last commandment, according to the English Church division, into two, in order to keep the number TEN. You will also find a much clearer distinction between the last two, than what there could possibly be in making the first into two. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house," as given in verse 17, is a distinct commandment of itself, and refers to houses, and, of course, to property and things inanimate belonging thereto. And again, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's," referring to persons and things animate belonging to our neighbour. And thus we form the ten commandments, just as we have them in our Liturgy.

The reason, then, why there is that difference in our arrangement of the commandments, from what is found in the English Common Prayer Book is, as we said before, because that was an alteration and innovation of itself. Always, before the time of the Reformation, the commandments were (as they are now in all other churches except the Church of England), divided as they are in our Liturgy.

But in this matter of division there is another point that is worthy of notice. In the text which we have quoted you will find it said that they were given on two tables of stone; and the question has been put how many were on one table, and how many on the other: for there is no distinction as far as the Scriptures themselves go. Each commandment went across the two. The arrangement consisted of three parts; that is to say, all the commandments relating to our duty to God being on one side of the tables—to love the Lord supremely, to reverence everything from Him, to keep His name holy, to remember the Sabbath day as a day of worship, and to keep it holy; and then on the other side were the laws of our duty to our neighbour, going through the particulars connected with them.

You will find that of the last seven commandments, the first five relate to acts, and the last two to motives. "Thou shalt not kill." "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Thou shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Then come those relating to motives, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house," and "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's." And you will perceive in this division matters of interest tending

to show how perfect the divine commandments are. The fourth commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," is a joining commandment, relating both to the precepts disclosing our duties to God, and those unfolding our duties to our neighbour. For the Lord is our Father in the highest degree, His Church in heaven and on earth, is our spiritual mother. Our earthly parents are images of this our Divine Father and heavenly mother. The obedience and honour due to our earthly father being representative to the child, of the honor and obedience to our Father who is in heaven. The obedience and honour due to a mother, is representative of the affectionate deference due to the true Church. A true mother is a nurse to the child, and its tenderest earthly parent, so in good time the Church nurses, and kindly feeds the soul, as it is beautifully said by the Apostle Peter, "I have fed you by the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." So that this commandment looks both ways, both to heaven and earth, both to the Lord and to the neighbour.

Now, the real and perpetual gift which comes from all these considerations, is the one that the Lord sets forth in His giving these commandments from the mountain, namely, that they should be to us our highest delight, as well as our highest duty. It was a sad error that crept in amongst men when they began to suppose that in keeping the Lord's commandments there was something excessively difficult, terribly hard, a penalty that almost made life into an ascetism. Why, nothing could be more mistaken. The keeping of the divine commandments ought to be our highest delight; our greatest joy; the thing that we should regard not only as our duty, but as in itself a holy and heavenly thing, giving blessedness and pleasure and peace. "In doing thy commandments there is great reward." Instead of its being a hard thing that God has set us, as is too often said at the present day—a test condition to be fulfilled, and yet which He knows cannot be done, and then He is to provide a substitute, so that by the Lord Jesus Christ keeping the commandments we may be relieved from doing them;—instead of this strange story having an atom of truth in it, or being founded on the Scriptures, or on sound sense, you will find that throughout the whole of the Bible, the commandments are pointed out as being the grand sources of happiness and peace of every kind,—as God's best gift to His creatures.

Let us take first, a cursory view of God's declarations to that effect. You will find them in every part of the Word. In

Deut. iv. 6, reference is made to the commandments in these words, "Keep, therefore, and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and shall say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Again, there is a most notable and beautiful instance of the same teaching, when the Lord says, "And, now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to walk in all his ways, and to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good,"—not which I command thee as things which cannot be done, but "which I command thee for thy good."—Deut. x. 12, 13. And again, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they might fear me and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"—Deut. v. 29. Precisely thus in the prophetic parts of the Word, and in fact, throughout every portion of divine wisdom we find the same teaching. In Isaiah xlvi. 18, it is written "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as the river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." And so, when the Lord came into the world He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever shall break the least of these my commandments and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but, whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." And summing up the whole in the last chapter of the Revelations, it is written, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Such, then, is the divine testimony respecting these sacred laws—that they are not either matters that are hard to do, or impossible to do, or terrible to do. In fact, it is the merest illusion for a person to suppose that it is hard to keep the divine commandments. Whenever a person is really earnest in loving God and his neighbour, he will find it ten times easier to keep the commandments than to break them. Take any one you please. How easy is it for a man who is upright and earnest to be honest! If a person seeks to deal with another in order to obtain useful articles, and both parties intend to do each other good, how simple and easy the transaction is. The one desires to take no advantage of the other, but to give as good as he wishes to

receive. How simple it is ! But let a thief intend to break a commandment, and he at once feels that he has got a very difficult matter to perform. He has to begin to scheme, and to plan how he shall accomplish his end, and not be discovered. He must get some cunning tools for his knavery ; he must keep away from the sight of every honest man or woman. He must sneak about so that nobody can detect him ; and if he succeed he must go away to deposit the things stolen, so that he shall run as little risk of discovery as may be. Why, look at the comparison between these two modes of life. How easy the one, and how difficult the other ! Yes, and each crime will be an eternal difficulty to the man who succeeds in it. If he succeed in his villany, he has stolen a little property from some one and injured him slightly, but he has robbed himself of his salvation, and injured himself eternally. There is the everlasting difference between right and wrong. If ever that man shall reach salvation, he will have to undo, as far as possible, all he has done. He will have to hate himself, to fight against himself, to detest himself—to repent in dust and ashes. He has gone down the hill instead of going upwards. He has to retrace his steps and get up back again, and then when he begins to lead a life of goodness, he will only be where he started from. Why, there could not possibly be a greater delusion than to imagine that hell's yoke is easy. The Israelites did not find the Egyptian yoke easy. The way to heaven is pleasantness itself compared with the yoke of sin which hell imposes upon the soul when it turns away from God, from purity and heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light ? Let a person earnestly seek to love the Lord, and to keep His commands, and he will find those words are true ; the very way of peace, purity, serenity and sufficiency, as well as of order and happiness. God will speak from the mountain again, and his speech will have this gracious lesson for us, Do what I command you ; for heaven is formed on the blessed laws that are contained in those ten commandments. If you have difficulty, it is not in the laws themselves, but in your degenerate state. Come to me and I will heal you. Are you imprisoned in guilt, in falsehood ? I will break the bars of your prison house—I will bring you out of Egypt.

SERMON XXI.

SLAVERY AMONGST THE ISRAELITES.

“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children: I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him unto the door, or the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.—Exodus xxi. 5, 6.

“Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still slavery thou art a bitter draught!” Such will ever be the sentiment of the upright lover of his kind and of his God. Freedom and rationality, says a great writer, are two faculties from the Lord in man. “A man by these faculties is reformed and regenerated by the Lord; and without them he could not be reformed and regenerated.” The Lord preserves these two faculties in a man inviolable, and sacred in every proceeding of His Divine Providence.

Freedom and reason, then, lie at the basis of all real progress, and, indeed, of all that is truly human. Those who oppose these in their fellow creatures, are assaulting the very essence of manhood in them. Hence, to make slaves of men, women, and children, to incite murderous ruffians to steal them, by buying them: to sell them, thus violating their marriage ties, and their parental affections, these are all abominations so essentially contrary to the Lord, to true humanity, and to all the purposes of Divine Providence, that the existence of these practices among so-called Christian nations for three hundred years, prosecuted by their people, sanctioned by their rulers, ecclesiastical as well as temporal, by popes, by bishops, by priests, by monarchs, by nobles, and by merchants alike, forms the crowning evidence that the church as the Lord's kingdom among men had come to its end. Future historians when recording the decline of the church from the time of the Council of Nice, will describe the follies, the cruelties, the darkness through which the church

passed for long dreary centuries, and then will say at last, **THEY STOLE MEN.** These so-called Christians crossed the ocean in hundreds of ships per annum, and stole human beings. They brought them in horrid ships so packed that cleanliness for weeks was impossible. And thousands died annually from stench, that other thousands might be landed to toil and live in compelled debasement, ignorance and profligacy, to enable these Christians to pass their time in idleness and wealth. Through awful periods of degeneracy, these professed disciples of Him who is love itself, and who taught that they only were His disciples who loved one-another, revelled in hate and revenge against their fellow-countrymen of different opinions, persecuted, maligned, made war upon each other, desolated nations from the lust of domineering over others, and at last they emulated each other in the barbarous work of stealing men.

False as the winds that round his vessel blow
Remorseless as the gulf that yawns below,
Is he who toils upon the wafting flood
A Christian broker in the trade of blood ;
Boisterous in speech, in action prompt and bold,
He buys, he sells,—he steals, he kills for gold.

Happily, since the dawn of the New Age, we are rising out of the horrid atmosphere of false thought in which these so-called Christian nations have lived and breathed for so long a time. We have witnessed the terrible consequences of this crime upon all who became entangled in it, as exhibited in the terrible desolations of the recent American war, where awful wrong has been awfully expiated, and the judgments of the Lord have been seen in the earth.

The spirit of the Bible is love to God and love to man, and all that wisdom which illustrates these.—Matt. xxii. 36—40. Whatever is inconsistent with this spirit cannot be true, and when any turn is given to a portion of the literal sense of the Holy Word, so as to make it sanction conduct which is essentially contrary to doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God, we should look very carefully to the context and the whole connection. We should look also at the views of those who have associated it with injustice, and compare them with the grand universal elements of the Word of God, and we shall generally detect the fallacy, and bring out the truth. Men there are who have so skilfully woven the commandments of God with their traditions, that it requires great faithfulness to truth, and great skill, to detect the false combination. So has it been in the scriptural defence of slavery. There was slavery in

patriarchal times, and there are laws respecting slavery in the Israelitish code, and so say these advocates, slavery is sanctioned at least not condemned in the Scriptures. Abraham was a slaveholder, he had men "bought with his money."—Gen. xvii. 13. Hagar was a bondwoman, and therefore Abraham was an example and a sanction for the slaveholders of modern times. What he, the friend of God did, cannot be wrong in us to do.

In reply to these, we waive altogether the unsoundness of Christians borrowing arguments and sanctions from the typical arrangements and shadows of the Old Testament, when the glorious principles of the New have been brought in, arguments by which polygamy, capricious divorce, animal sacrifices might equally be justified, and we remark that the slavery of the Jewish Law and that of the late slave states of America were totally different things.

The two systems were different in their origin, different in their character, and different in their results.

The Jewish slave code, though a part of those laws which God gave them because of the hardness of their hearts, and which were not purely good, (Ezek. xx. 25) was yet far better than what it superseded. Jewish slavery, as we shall see, was remedial, restorative, and tended to freedom. It was a discipline for reforming the criminal, and strengthening the weak, issuing in the year of Jubilee.

American slavery would not have been tolerated by the Jewish law and usage for a moment. Modern slavery, as practised by Christian nations, was founded and sustained by man-stealing, and man-stealing was forbidden among the Jews on pain of death. "HE THAT STEALETH A MAN, AND SELLETH HIM, OR IF HE BE FOUND IN HIS HAND, HE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH."—Ex. xxi. 16. To steal property was punished by compelling the thief to restore fourfold, but to steal a man, to deprive him of his liberty for no crime of his own, and sell him, or use him as a mere tool, a chattel, was a felony, punishable by death.

This one law in its spirit and in its letter, destroys the whole foundation for a scriptural vindication of black-slavery. If they who steal a man, and they in whose hands the stolen man was found had been punished by death, how could black-slavery have existed among white men ?

But let us further examine the causes and character of Jewish slavery, and we shall see how far both are from lending any sanction to slavery as commonly understood.

Jewish slavery was, firstly, a system of reform for criminals; secondly, a support for the poor; thirdly, a preservation from death, of captives taken in war.

Firstly, we have said Jewish slavery was their mode of treating criminals. "If a man steal an ox or sheep, and kill it or sell it: he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double. He should make a full restitution: if he have nothing, then **HE SHALL BE SOLD FOR HIS THEFT.**"—Ex. xxii. 1—4.

This slavery was their equivalent for our imprisonment, with this difference, that bondmen resided with the family of their masters, were treated humanely, had their Sabbaths, their instruction, their worship, equally with others, and could redeem themselves if they were able, and in any case were free at the seventh year with liberal presents and kindness.—Lev. xxv. 47—53.

Secondly, their slavery was equivalent to our parochial relief. If a man was poor and unable to maintain himself and his family, he sold *himself* to a wealthier person, who provided him with comforts and employment; enabled him to acquire property if he could, and after the help and discipline of such a life, he also went free with presents in the seventh year.

The third form of Jewish slavery was that of buying bondmen and bondwomen from the nations round about. And when we are familiar with the state of ancient nations, we shall understand, that this permission of slavery, though far from being what was perfectly agreeable to the Lord, was yet a merciful provision by which mankind were preserved from greater evils. So terrible were the diabolical passions into which men sunk in ancient times, that they not only lost all value for human life, but were disposed to revel in slaughter. When they overcame a city they burned to destroy man, woman and child. With savage vengeance they gloated over wide spread ruin, and were sated only when the last groan of the last victim was silent in death. Such is the inner heart of selfishness, it breathes hatred against all, and when opened to its deepest malignity, would wish, like the heathen emperor respecting Rome, that mankind had one neck, and that they could thus at one blow all be destroyed. Slavery in ancient times moderated this ruthless passion. The conquerors, seeing that gain could be made of their captives, saved them and sold them. Slavery was thus a mode of saving life, and amongst the Israelites, of

teaching their bondmen, and training them, until in course of time, by marriage or other methods, they became free, with all the acquired advantages of religion, education, and the blessings of social life. Ultimately there were no slaves in Canaan. There were none in the time of the Divine Saviour.

So tender were the regulations of the Jewish law in relation to slaves, that if a master injured any member of the slave's body, even to the destruction of a tooth, the slave became free.—Ex. xxi. 27. They were part of his household, they enjoyed protection, worship, and kindly treatment, and although so many instances exist in Israelitish history of wickedness of other kinds, no instance appears anywhere of cruelty to a slave.

One law has been misunderstood by Bishop Colenso as involving such cruelty, and yet it is the very reverse. The law is contained in the chapter before us, "And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished ; for he is his money."—v. 20, 21.

We must not forget that flogging was confined among the Hebrews to forty stripes, and to be inflicted on the decision of judges.—Deu. xxv. 1—3. For these stripes there was an appropriate cane or rod (shebet), and it was illegal to use any other. In the original language of the above law we read, not as in the English version. "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod," meaning any bludgeon, but with shebet,—the judicial staff, "and he die," intimating that in such case, if death took place on the spot, then might cruelty be inferred, and the master should be punished ; but if the slave continued a day or two then it must be concluded that only due chastisement had been administered, and the master was blameless. In all cases there was one law for the Hebrews, and for the stranger ; with the exception of the year of Jubilee, which applied only to Israelitish slaves.—Num. xv. 15, 16. And as we have seen for the time being, slavery of all kinds was an amelioration of greater evils, and tended to elevation, to freedom, and to ultimate and universal good.

The law was a shadow of good things to come. The Israel of old in all their arrangements were the types of the church, the Israel of God. And though regeneration and the Lord's kingdom are open to all, the advancement of each soul depends on its own use of its great and wonderful powers. The Lord's mercy extends to all. His Holy Spirit aids everyone. Yet some become sons in

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the celestial family, they enter into the very spirit of love which forms the Divine Nature, and dwell in that spirit for ever. "The son abides in the house for ever."—John viii. 35. "God is love. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."—1 John iv. 16. "There is no fear in love. Perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."—v. 18. These sons of love form the highest angels of heaven. They are flames of celestial fire.—Psalm civ. 4. These were represented by Judah, the peculiar tribe, the central power which bore the sceptre among the hosts of Israel.

Others there are who are children of the light. With them truth is the chief thing. Truth indeed leads them to goodness and to love, as a right and a duty, but truth itself is their joy and crown. These are the Lord's friends. They are beautiful and good, but they are like Peter, more than like John. They are the elders who have the harps of gold in their hands, but not the living ones who are in the midst of the throne. The truth has made them free, and unfolds to them its diamond splendours, its pearls of great price. The Lord is to them the light, the law, the glory, and the beauty, that shine for ever on the throne of heaven. But the humility of the little child is not so deeply revealed in these, as in their brethren, who had more profoundly humbled themselves in their regenerate life, and been more lovingly exalted by the Lord the Lamb, their God and Saviour. These fill the second degree of the mansions of the blest, and were represented by the house of Israel, as distinguished from the house of Judah.

But besides these, in the church of the Lord, there is a great host who can be induced to be obedient and renounce sin, but who make little progress in the harmonies, the beauties, and the blessedness of the divine principles of things. These serve, but they do not enter into freedom. They come into the kingdom, and for these hired servants there is bread enough and to spare, (Luke .xv. 17,) but they are not there as sons or even as friends, they are only servants. They are under masters, and how blessed a thing is that infinite mercy which provides for them, and makes them as happy as their states will bear. Some advance and come into heavenly freedom: these are the slaves that come to the heavenly jubilee. Others never do more than become obedient with the general stream. They can take truth from others, but never rise to the dignity of seeing it in themselves. These are they who serve for ever. They are not evil, but are only in the

lowest form of good. They love their masters, and their willingness to be obedient to divine truth as shining through others, is represented by their ear being bored through at the door, or door-post. The door and door-post, are the letter of the Word and its general doctrines, which serve as introductions to internal things. They remain as persons attached to the great family in heaven for ever, but only as obedient servants. They are the ten thousand times ten thousand round about the throne.

The wife and children which they will not leave, are the affections and sentiments belonging to this comparatively low state. If such Christians do not ascend higher, they are yet suffered and blest by the Highest, to the utmost of their ability. They are the lower vessels of the heavenly House: the door-keepers of the kingdom of God.—Ps. lxxxiv, 10.

Let us recur again to the law of the punished slave, so hastily misconstrued by the Bishop of Natal. As punishment was only inflicted on the decision of the Judges, and with the appointed rod, (the shebet) we must assume that the case contemplated is that of a criminal person justly punished, but that undue haste and severity are condemned by this law. If he died at once, the punishment would be held to be too severe, and the harsh inflictor would himself be punished; but if the criminal continued a day or two, no undue severity could be supposed.

Let us regard this law in its typical character. The bondman condemned would then represent a person never more than an external member of the church, one yielding obedience, but not having an earnest love for the truth which makes the Christian truly free.—John viii, 32. The punishment of the rod would represent the condemnation of such a one by the rule of the Divine Word, for the same rod which consoles the good condemns the bad.—Ps. xxiii, 4. Severity being forbidden which would bring speedy death on the punished slave, teaches, that in judging and punishing the evil we are not to be hasty nor harsh. We must not exceed in severity, but deal moderately and justly: if mischief then ensue, the fault will not be ours.

The purely spiritual sense of the Word unveils the divine character of this law still more perfectly. We must regard persons as the type of principles. Servants, then, represent principles which serve, and the truths which serve us so well in our regenerate life, are like servants of different ranks and degrees. Bond-servants mean apparent truths, such appearances as are pressed into the service of truth, but are not really in perfect

harmony with it. The statements of the "anger of God" in the Scriptures, because the purity and order of His laws repel and pain the wicked as much as if anger sustained and enforced them. The early allegories of the Word, which veiled the wisdom of the primeval church, and yet revealed enough for the simple piety of past ages. The fleshly dispensation of the Jews, altogether with its outward sacrifices of sheep, goats, oxen, which kept the flickering torch of holy light still shining in the valley of darkness, though for ages the souls which held it up were of the earth, earthy. All these and many others are but bondmen in the House of the Lord. When we, who in our pupilage have revered these, see apparent truths and merciful accommodations, and applying the rod of real Divine Truth to them, discover their contrariety and reject them, we must not do it recklessly and irreverently, but calmly and thoughtfully, as things needful to childish states of mind, although if done patiently and reverently, men may put away childish things. This divine rule of charity and wisdom is inculcated in the law before us, and in many a symbol of the Holy Word. The snuffers which removed the spent ashes of the light which burned unceasingly before the altar, were golden snuffers. Many of the supports of the piety of past ages may not be necessary to us, but they were essential to them. Like the clothes of early children they were good for their day, and they should only be removed with a loving and careful hand like that of the tender mother, who retains the little clothes for many a year, of that lost one who once was the glory and the joy of home.

If he continue a day or two, the law declares the master shall not be punished, for he is his money, (in the Hebrew, his silver). This continuance of the dying bondman for a day or two, represents the regenerating Christian doing judgment upon past and useful fallacies with full consideration, he must continue a state or two. When the soul in its upward progress rises above the letter of a precept into its spirit, though he rejects the form he once revered, if he does so with serious thought and reverent feeling, he sees the same truth in a diviner light: it becomes his silver. Too much haste in changing old views for new, is to be avoided, as well as too much delay. Let judgment be done when judgement is needed, but let it be done with care, with reverence, and with charity. Then, while we rise from the letter to the inner life of holy things, we shall have ample confirmation of the truth, "The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver purified in a furnace of earth": the bondman will become our silver.

SERMON XX.

THE OX THAT GORES A MAN.

"If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit."—*Exodus* xxi. 28.

It is said by the apostle Paul, in a passage that is well-known to the readers of the Sacred Scriptures, that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," but on reading a passage such as that which forms our present text, a person who knows nothing but the literal sense of the Holy Word will naturally ask,—What manner of instruction in righteousness, what manner of doctrine, correction, or growth in every good work, can possibly come from such a declaration as this concerning an ox goring a man, or any of the laws connected with it? And, it is true enough, that if we were to regard simply these divine laws in relation to their outward application, this portion of the Word of God might well be classed amongst those which might have had some relation to the Jews and their dispensation, but whose value must now have entirely passed away. Yet, we should not be much edified in our view of the Word of God by considering it in the light we have just mentioned, because the whole Israelitish dispensation was a "shadow of good things to come;" and, consequently, to say of any part of the Book of God, that it belongs to the Israelitish dispensation, and has nothing to do with us, is entirely to ignore the very purpose for which the Israelitish dispensation existed. Every part of the law was to be "a pattern of the true," the Israel of old, of the Israel now; the Jerusalem of old, "of the Jerusalem that is from above."

Consequently, this argument alike with that which teaches that all divine inspiration must be for eternal and spiritual uses—this argument equally shows us, that, however the man of the letter only, may fail altogether in seeing how this part of the Word of God is for instruction in doctrine, in righteousness, in reproof, and in thoroughly furnishing the man of God unto all good works, that yet it has its deep and glorious wisdom for those who are aware that God's words enclose eternal and spiritual thoughts, and are everywhere "spirit and life." Indeed, we shall easily be prepared to enter upon the solution of the divine lessons before us, if we bear in mind, that the ox, like the sheep, the lamb, the horse, and a variety of other animals, is brought before us in the Word of God, with exceeding frequency. They are all symbols of important principles in the human mind.

Without bearing this in mind, what should we be able to make of the 20th verse of the 32nd chapter of Isaiah, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." For what possible connection could there be between a person simply sending his ox or his ass to be watered at the river, and his becoming the object of divine blessing? Yet so the Word of God reads, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." But if we bear in mind the great law which we have so often dwell upon, that everything in the world around, corresponds to some principle in the world within, according to the peculiar character of each, we shall then be easily able to observe that there are some especially beautiful lessons connected with the ox. For the ox has in all ages represented to the thoughtful mind the disposition of plodding, patient industry. That animal is the very expression of patient, plodding, steady purpose, and therefore, when it is said, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox," we can readily discern a divine lesson, when we think not of earthly waters, but of heavenly—the sacred streams of the Word of God—and think of a person going there with that disposition in him which is like the ox. The man who is patient, and has a constant observance of duty, and who goes to the Word of God to be enlightened in that duty, by means of its sacred lessons, will, undoubtedly, be blessed. He has, then, not only a disposition to obey, but an enlightened mind. A man who has not been instructed in the principles of divine truth, may have this ox-

like disposition, but, in ignorance, he may be misled. He may be drawn away by a deceiver, be made the creature of a tyrant, or a false principle. But, "Blessed are they who send their ox to the waters";—who go with the intention of learning from the Word of God what is right, and then doing it.

Remembering this symbol of the ox, you will find again and again the same divine image presented to us in the Word, as, for instance, in the 2nd verse of the 4th chapter of Malachi, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall," that is to say, they who fear the Lord, shall have the desire born again in the soul by regeneration, that subsequently, becomes an ox, but begins by being a tender, innocent, careful impulse to plod on in the way of duty, and go forth as calves of the stall. Again, in the sublime representation in Rev. iv. 7, which describes the affections of the highest angels, under the representation of the FOUR LIVING ONES, that were in the midst of the throne. The throne being the symbol of heaven, filled with the spirit of the Lord himself. The living ones in the midst of the throne represent the best angels, those who are all alive with the spirit of love. It is said "the face of one was like a lion," to represent the loving courage of those who supremely love the Lord; "And the face of the second was like a calf," to represent the tender spirit of steady obedience these blessed ones have:—bold as a lion to think what is right, gentle as a lamb in the path of duty. They are also said to have the face of a man, indicative of their intelligence, and, fourthly, the face of a flying eagle, descriptive of their power of soaring into the holiest things. These celestial qualities of those who are perfected in loving the Lord above all things, and their neighbour as themselves, are thus presented in their quadruple perfections. You will find from the symbolic character of the ox, that there was instituted amongst the Israelites a daily sacrifice of an ox, to teach us, that, it is this same spirit of plodding devotion to duty, of careful, loving attention to every little requirement which duty demands, which forms the life of the true Christian. For life is not made up of certain grand crises, of a few great things, but of innumerable little things, and he who is attentive from right principles, to little things, leads the truly heavenly life. The good man begins his duty in the morning by asking divine help to do right, he plods on throughout the day, attending to the duties of his calling in the spirit of our Lord's teaching, when

He says, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." This law is often overlooked by those who hope to reach the kingdom of heaven, but who expect to do it by some great demonstration, as Naaman expected to be cured by some striking display. When the prophet told him to go and wash in Jordan seven times, he said, "I thought he would have required me to do some great thing." He supposed the dignity of the prophet, and his own dignity as captain of the hosts of Syria required this. But not so, nor is it ever so. Just as mountains are made up of stones, and the ocean is made up of drops, so is a virtuous life made up of little duties. "Give us this day our daily bread," is the Christian's prayer. Strength is given us daily. It is daily bread that the Christian needs. It is daily duty that he has to perform. Though the distance between the state in which he is to-day, and the state in which he will be when he enters the golden palace of his God is great; yet that distance will be accomplished step by step. All that he is required to do is to shun the evil of to-day, and do the good of to-day for the love of the Lord, and the love of his neighbour, and in that way everything that the Christian is called upon to do will be accomplished in the Lord's good time. A step at a time. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." The spiritual ox is this persevering steady disposition. The brazen sea, which stood in the courtyard of the temple, and in which everyone that entered into the tabernacle had first to wash, was placed upon twelve statues of oxen, to teach the same great lesson, that, all purifications of heaven are to be connected with the daily duties of a plodding life. We must not ask ourselves what extraordinary things must we perform; but just as an ox goes round step by step in doing its daily work, so we must do our Lord's will in the duties of our vocation, and while we are doing this from love to the Lord, and charity to our neighbour, our purification will go on.

He who forsakes his daily duty and substitutes for it something else that he supposes will do equally well, or be more beneficial, will find that all his pretended righteousness will fail him at last. The brazen sea of heaven is always on the twelve oxen.

But here the ox is not spoken of approvingly. It is not the ox on which the brazen sea rested, or that was offered up as a burnt offering to the Most High which is brought before us here; but it is an ox that gores a man or a woman, and of which it is said, that it shall be stoned, and the owner shall then be quit.

Every object, both in nature and in the Word, is capable of

being used in a good sense or in a bad one. Whatever it represents in a good sense, in the bad one it represents the opposite.

The ox that gores a man or a woman, represents the perverse disposition of an obstinate mind, that offends against what is manly, or what is connected with the affection of truth. The horn with which it gores is representative of the power of such a principle, and hence, the ox thus coming and suddenly destroying a man or a woman, reminds us of that awful, terrible description which is given in Psalm xxii., of the bitterness of our Lord's last temptation, when he says, "Many bulls of Bashan compassed me about." The spirits that compassed him about and gaped upon him, were infernals who were in the perpetual disposition of obstinately doing evil. They were therefore called "bulls of Bashan." The ox in this bad sense, represents the disposition of doing evil,—an obstinate, perverse heart. When such a disposition starts up in the soul and injures what is true or good, it is represented as goring a man or a woman, such an animal was to be stoned, and then the owner would be quit. When it is said that such a state of heart as is offensive against truth, has done serious injury to the soul, and it is discovered that such injury has been perpetrated out of the wilful purpose of an unregenerate affection, it shall be stoned. That is to say, the Word shall condemn it, the Divine Truths of the Word shall be brought forward so as to guard the soul against its efforts, and then there will be no further harm. The first law respecting the oxen, represents the state of one who has not been previously instructed in what is good, in whom the will is still unregenerate, and who is, therefore, wild, wayward, and inconsiderate. When Divine Truth is brought forward, and the soul is shewn that such and such acts are contrary to the commands of heaven, it comes at once into a higher and better state, and there is no further harm done. Our Lord speaks of such when he says, "If ye were blind ye would have no sin." They are instructed, the ox is put to death,—that is, their disposition is utterly rejected, and the man is quit.

But the Divine Word goes on to say that if he were wont to push in times past, and if its owner had been cautioned, and he has not taken the means by which it should be prevented from endangering any one, he, also, should be put to death. Because this represents the disposition of one who sins against instruction and warning, in days gone by. Such a one has allowed evil to come into reiterated rebellion and contumacy against the Most High. Divine Truth has explained to him how wrong

his conduct is, but he has not guarded against it. In such case, not only is he found to be guilty of outward evil, but of inward persistent sin, and he perishes in spiritual death. Not only the outside of the cup and platter are wrong, but the inside also, he sins, not only in the sight of man, but in the sight of God; therefore, it is said that he, too, should be put to death.

The next law is that of the case of the ox whose owner has been warned but which has gored, it is said, a son or a daughter, "According to the same judgment," it is said, "it shall be done unto him." By the ox injuring a son or a daughter, or a man-servant or maid-servant, is represented a similar evil disposition, but which goes against laws and principles, that are not of so interior a character as those which have been mentioned.

There are sins unto death and sins not unto death. There may have been serious injury, yet the injury is not so great but that it may be repaired, and expiation made. In such case the owner shall pay whatever money (silver) is put upon him. In the lighter instances he shall pay thirty shekels of silver, and then he shall be ransomed, to teach us this great truth, that in every case of disobedience, even though it be in ignorance, there is no possibility of being brought into the order of heaven, but by means of that instruction represented by the thirty shekels of silver. If a person has gone wrong he must have truth brought, he must be made intelligent in what is right, and obeying that instruction in his daily life and habits, there can be restoration made. "He must do whatever is laid upon him," it is said. In all these laws, that sublime truth is taught, that there is no means whatever of avoiding bringing the soul into true order if we would go to heaven. Some of the most injurious fallacies that affect the human race at present, are associated with the idea of a death-bed repentance, as if the new man could be formed from mere wishing. These divine laws, solemnly assure us that this cannot be done, that a man if he has fallen into disobedience against the will of God, and offended against the divine laws, must make expiation and restitution. He must by repentance do whatever Divine Truth tells him to do. When we apply common sense to the consideration of our eternal condition, we must see that it cannot be otherwise. To enter heaven, we must become heavenly.

The Lord Jesus Christ came to give us power to do good, by infusing his Holy Spirit into us. By His being divinely righteous we may become righteous. "Their righteousness is of me saith the Lord." But we must work out our salvation with

fear and trembling. Every man is condemned not for the sin which transpired 6,000 years ago, but for the sin that now rankles in his heart, and makes him disobedient. Every man is saved, not by having attributed to him the righteousness which is not his, and is utterly foreign to his own character, but by receiving that righteousness which is imparted to him by the Lord, giving him purity of heart, and therefore a love for all that is pure ;—giving him humility of spirit, and therefore a preparation for the kingdom of humility ;—giving him heaven while he lives, and therefore preparing him for heaven when he dies. It is this truth then which is taught when it is said, that if an ox has done harm, the man who owns him must be prepared to do whatever is laid upon him. Each man must repent for himself. Himself come into a disposition of order. He must slay the offending ox, and give an ox for an ox, along with the thirty shekels of silver. For a disobedient spirit he must give an obedient one, for ignorance he must give intelligence. For inward truth is heavenly silver, and fulness of this is represented by the number thirty—the number three and its combinations always being the symbol of what is full and complete, and perfect, in relation to truth.

Then it is said in the case of a man who has opened a pit, or has dug a pit and not covered it, and his neighbour's ox or ass having fallen therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give silver unto the owner of them, and the dead beast shall be his. By making a pit, in the spiritual sense is represented conceiving a false doctrine—a snare—a something which tends to make man false ; and whenever a person endeavours in this way to betray his neighbour to wrong—ensnares him in what is false and vicious, whatever the harm is, he will have to make it good, or he will never enter heaven. He must shun honestly all the ways of hypocrisy and evil ; turn absolutely in life to the very opposite course to that which he has been accustomed to—hating all the snares that he has ever made to seduce others from goodness, or there is no preparation for heaven, no forgiveness, no acceptance by the Lord, “Whosoever turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.”

The case of an ox having killed another, and being sold for money, (silver) which has to be divided between the owners, is one that implies a disposition carried to an extreme, so as to destroy another equally valuable. This must be parted with, and a true proportion obtained : the silver must be divided between them.

Lastly, "five oxen must be given for a stolen ox, and four sheep for a stolen sheep."

In other words more efforts must be made to come back from a state of disorder into the order of heaven—more efforts for every act of disobedience by means of which a man wanders away from God's commands, than would have been necessary to stand in his original condition. It is *not* true that the greater the sinner, the greater the saint. Sin blunts the perceptions of the soul, dulls the affections, and weakens the powers of virtue. There is no case of exception. We *must* be born again. We must attend to the divine admonition, "If your righteousness exceed not the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees ye shall in NO CASE enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," He says, "and do not the things that I say?" It is by *doing* that our nature is fixed.

If, unhappily, we have been disposed not only to have no disposition for what is good ourselves, but to steal from our neighbour, or indispose him to be obedient, when Divine Truth opens upon our souls, we must honestly and truly determine to lead a new life, to cease to do evil, to learn to do well. *Now* it will cost us great effort, great earnestness—much more trouble than it would have done. We must pay five oxen for an ox. We have strayed far away from what we might have been. We must travel every foot back.

But what of that, we shall have the Saviour for our Guide, and Defender and Friend, and Heaven for our Home. Arise, let us go hence.

SERMON XXIII.

A MAN SMITING HIS SERVANT THAT HE DIE.

"And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be sorely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money."—Exodus xxi. 20, 21.

The passage we have just read struck the Bishop of Natal unfavourably in these two aspects—first of all, that God should have appeared to sanction slavery, for the servant that is spoken of here and elsewhere in this chapter you will perceive is essentially a slave—one bought for money, and who might be sold for money; and in the second place, that when under certain circumstances the smiting of the servant should be attended with death, there should yet be no punishment, because it is said the slave was "his money." These things seemed to the Bishop to present such a defective state of moral right, such an offence against the Divine Law, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," that, he concluded it could not be from God, and the unhappy result seems to have been, that all regard for the Word of God, as a Divine Revelation, was broken down in the mind of this distinguished Prelate.

But let us endeavour to supply what the Bishop was lacking, only in common with a vast number of others. The true view of the Word of God had never been had by him. And when his imperfect view, the notion that so large a number still entertain, because they have never deeply pondered the matter—the notion which teaches that the Word of God is simply to be regarded as a literary Work, like any other book—came to be rigidly tested, it broke down. When the mind that holds such a view dares to investigate, and to think, and to be determined not to be bound by any prejudice or prepossession, the time will surely come when that man's faith will break down as certainly as did Bishop Colenso's.

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And the reason is, that such a person has got a wrong conception of the Word altogether. He views it as he would view the book of any human author. Such a view is totally contrary to the very character of a divine book. For a divine book must be like every other divine work—spiritual in its nature. God is a spirit, and whatsoever he does is spiritual. It must be like every other divine work, more beautiful, more dignified, more thoroughly full of heavenly wisdom, the more deeply you examine it. Man's works are distinguished from God's works by this—that man's works are most comely on the outside. He labours to make them beautiful and perfect to the eye of the outside observer. God's works are most perfect and beautiful inside, because they proceed from the perfection of God within, and, therefore, must necessarily be most perfect as they are nearest to Him. Just take as an exemplification of this truth, the statue of the sculptor, and God's real man. If you regard the work of the artist, however beautiful it may be, however perfectly chiselled and formed may be the features; and the limbs, however expressive of majesty, delicacy and grandeur; however much it may seem almost as if the mouth were about to speak, yet go beneath the outside and you will find nothing but roughness and death. Take, however, the human being, he is covered by a beautiful skin it is true, a wondrous tissue, at once a protection, a beauty, and a mirror on which are portrayed the thousand hues of mind; but if you wish to find the greater perfection of the body you must go beneath the skin, and see the delicate texture of the brain, interwoven with its involutions and convolutions. Trace the blood vessels—the veins and the arteries, and all the organs of nourishment, growth, and secretion. These form a collection of prodigies of wisdom, and beauty, and use. The body is of God, the statue is of man.

Again, take a piece of human needlework, and however daintily it may be done, and however fine it may look, if you put it under the microscope you will see that the fine threads are rough and ragged, and far from being so beautiful as they seemed to the naked eye. But take the wing of a butterfly and subject that to the same inspection. The more closely you look the more beautiful it is; the more brilliant are the colours; the more delicate the feather like projections; and that which seemed to be comparatively coarse to the naked eye, when subjected to this minute inspection, becomes the most delicate and lovely that can be conceived. Here is God's work—there is man's work.

Now, so must it be if the Book of God is the work of God. Precisely the same law will hold good. The surface must be the least valuable ; underneath must be deeper wisdom. And this is just what the Lord himself says, " My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts as your thoughts ; for high as the heavens are above the earth ; so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts." This, then, is the law we ought ever to have in view when going to the Word of God. The letter of the Word generally will be found to be orderly, historical, divinely true and beautiful as a basis for the spirit of the Word, yet the spirit of the Word is a still diviner glory, and if it should appear that here and there you find the letter is not such as can be regarded as perfect in itself, then view it in the relation to its soul. The seeming imperfections are chinks, as it were, through which divine glory appears. They are adaptations fraught with spiritual beauty, and inviting us to look inward. If the surface seem rough, dig below, and you will discover the inner meaning,—the divine signification,—the wisdom from God himself. Never doubt for a moment, " The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul."

On a former occasion, when considering the character of Israelitish slavery (Sermon 21), we pointed out the essential difference between modern slavery, and slavery as tolerated in the Jewish dispensation. Slavery among the Israelites was remedial, protective and temporary. It was in all cases calculated to improve and to elevate. But we venture to call your attention to the especial enactment of our text, which, when considered by itself seems harsh and cruel, yet when viewed in relation to the entire system of Jewish law loses much of its painful character.

We must not forget that there was the same law for Israelite and non-Israelite in social and general matters, all over the land. " Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country : for I am the Lord your God." Lev. xxiv. 22.

Now, the law in relation to beating was as follows, " And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him and not exceed : lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee."—Deu. xxv. 2, 3.

When, therefore, a person was considered deserving of being

beaten he was not to be punished by *any* body, nor by *any* kind of weapon ; but he was to be brought to the judge, and by him to be adjudged to a punishment not exceeding forty stripes, and by the judicial rod (called *shebet* in the original). Let us bear these circumstances in mind, and it will be seen that the law which forms our text is a still further restriction of punishment. If a man in the infliction of the punishment sanctioned by the judge, and with the legal rod, caused immediate death, it would be taken as cruelty, and he would be punished. But if death did not ensue until a day or two had passed by, the punisher would be accounted blameless. Viewed thus in harmony with the whole constitution of Jewish law, the enactment which seems harsh at first sight may be regarded as a regulation of mercy. No promiscuous violence was allowed. The transgressor must be brought to the judge, no outrageous punishment was permitted, forty stripes must not be exceeded ; and these must not be inflicted with malicious heaviness, for if the person punished died under the infliction the chastiser must himself be chastised. When we thus read the law, "If a man smite his servant or his maid with the rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished, notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished," we may regard it as altogether good and wise, an adaptation to a disorderly state of mankind it is true, but such an adaptation as would protect the weak for the time being, and prepare them ultimately for a more perfect state.

But let us now endeavour to see what is the spiritual sense of this same divine revelation. And never forget, that, whatever may be the appearance of the letter—whether it be allegory, as belongs to the early part of the Word ; whether it be literal history, as belongs to that part of the Word relating to the Jews from the time of Abraham ; whether it be narrative or parable, as in the gospels ; or vision, as in the prophets and in the Revelation of Saint John,—all these outward varieties cover one glorious series of spiritual lessons contained underneath. The inner wisdom is like a vein of silver everywhere running right through the strata of that glorious country. "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

In this respect, then, let us regard the Divine Word before us. We are told, that, "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished for he is his money," (his silver.)

The terms servant and maid, in the spiritual sense of these expressions, conduct us to the heavenly fact, that every man who is trying to live for heaven has services performed to him by a great variety of things. He receives service especially from the divine truths of the Word, which help him from time to time on his spiritual journey,—one serves him in one way, another serves him in another, and a third serves him in a still higher way.

You will remember the account of the Queen of Sheba coming to see Solomon's house and household. It is said, that when she beheld the meat of his table, the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers and their apparel, and his cup-bearers, and the ascent by which the king went up to the house of the Lord, her heart sunk within her. The human heart as it is advancing in the regenerate life is precisely like this beautiful palace of King Solomon. There are some principles which minister to purity of heart—beautiful principles clothed in heavenly robes ; and there are others again which come as cup-bearers to us. When we are a little weary and want encouragement, each comes with a cup of heavenly wine and gives us to drink, and cheers us on our course, and strengthens us to go onwards in our regeneration. There are others, however, that are like slaves. These are mistaken views, mistaken systems, mistaken habits. They can sometimes help us on, but for a time only. They are not freemen, servants of our Heavenly Father who come down from Him as the truths are that are free, and that tend to make us free ; but they are bondmen taken from other nations.

When man was supposed to be all body, or nearly so, then the doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the system of Zoroaster did good service, it sustained the conviction of the immortality of man.

The doctrine of hell being a place of material fire, is a bondman, who with coarse rude souls, no doubt, does good service, until they are quickened in their spiritual perceptions to see and feel the horror of the more terrible fires of inward lust and passion.

The superstitions of various countries are bondmen, which often render good service in maintaining order until higher and nobler principles come in. The mistaken views of many portions of the letter of the Word are of great service in child-like states of ignorance.

Astronomy has corrected the idea that the world is fixed and flat, and that the rest of the glorious universe moves round it. Geology has done the same thing in relation to the creation of

the world in a week, and the age of mankind being only six thousand years ; yet these views had sustained the piety of millions of mankind, and will do so still in the early child-like states of all in their days of ignorance. How much all men owe to the support they receive from views and customs which largely compose the atmosphere in which they live, but which are not the pure outgrowth of heavenly truth with them, it is difficult to say, but certainly, all may say with the Apostle, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things," 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

It has helped many a man in the early part of his regenerate life to be told, and to be led into the thought, that God has an especial number of the elect, favourites of His, that He will take care of, and bear whether they will or not, through all their difficulties, so that they will come infallibly into heaven. When a man is in a very low and imperfect state, and does not perceive that there is something essentially unjust in this, and contrary to real wisdom and real life, he is helped for a time. He begins to be religious, he sees in some parts of the Bible appearances that seem to him to confirm this state of things. This moderated selfishness may be just a bridge between his low state of heart and a purer condition, and which helps him over. In due time he is prepared for better things.

It assists many a man to be told that God is a terrible Being, and that He will chastise him most awfully if he continues to live the life that he does ; that He will punish him for ever and ever by extraordinary pains and penalties ; that He will burn and torture him for everlasting ages. His fears are acted on in this way, and he is brought into states of obedience and subdued by what he conceives to be the terrors of the Almighty.

The Word in its letter shines with varied light. It is like Joseph's coat of many colours. It is adapted to every kind of man, in order, as it were, that every kind of man may be brought into connection with the Lord until He can make him a wiser and a better man,—an angel.

Those things which are only imperfect views of truth, are like slaves which do low yet important services for us. The times come, however, in which we detect faults in these bondmen. When we have advanced beyond the condition in which they would serve us at all, and have got a true view of interior divine lessons, then we must bring them to the judge, or pure Divine Truth. We must have the rod of God in our hands—

THE ROD—not *any* rod, but the rod of the judge and of the king, because the rod spiritually means the power of truth properly understood. Such a rod is described when David says in the 23rd Psalm, “Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,” the same sort of rod which is represented in the book of Revelations, when it is said that the glorious woman—the church who brings forth a man child—shall rule all nations with a rod of iron. This rod rules all passions and principles of mind with divine truth fully understood. Now it is this rod which must correct our bondsmen. When we perceive some of these to be contrary to divine truth, then they may be smitten with the rod. But it must not be hastily done. We must not get into the way of thinking, “Oh! well, if there is a spiritual sense in everything in the Bible, then the literal sense is nothing at all,” and reject it altogether. Do not smite the man-servant or maid-servant harshly so as to produce death at once; but take care that everything in this respect is done thoughtfully and carefully. Let there be a full reflection on the subject.

Think gently, that you may perceive quietly what is the truth. Let there be no harsh throwing away of old views. Take care of your old house, though it may be narrow until you perceive there is another and grander house which the Lord has prepared for you. If the time has come for the bondsman to die, let it be after a day or two. Take time to think; and mind that it is done in the daylight. In such case you will do no harm. These old slaves have done their work. They are of no further use.

Although the slaves die away, their place will be supplied by other and better servants, and more loving companions,—by glorious truths from the Lord. There will be an increasing number of angelic helps and blessed comforts. You will pass on in good time to higher and nobler states until you enter heaven. Such, then, is the spiritual lesson which is given in this divine law.

Let me ask, finally, if there be anything that is unworthy of God in this regulation either in its letter or in its spirit? Is it not worthy of the Divine Being, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, to have tempered in days of old the ferocity and torturings which men were guilty of, by giving laws which they would adopt, and which were far better than those which they had before? And when we see that these laws in their spirit teach us lessons of wisdom for all time, and help us to rise from the shadows of the letter into the light of the spirit of divine

beauty, may we not then well say this Word is worthy of God. Thy Word, O Lord, is glorious on earth, and is for ever settled in heaven. Help me to use it until I get there, and when in my everlasting home I shall rejoice in its divine beauty, while eternal ages roll on.

Let us be ever patient and considerate, not hasty and rash. In the days of our darkness and our weakness our Heavenly Father mercifully permitted us to be aided by views and ideas, not the best in themselves, but the best for us. Some of these are very old. Habits and customs derived from Pagan times. Some are superstitions, having no real essence of truth in them. We have derived them from the nations round about. We see now they are slaves, not the Lord's free-men. And both they and the affections belonging to them, the men-servants and maid-servants are now injurious to us, yet we must not hastily reject them or deprive them of life. We must take them to the judge. The Lord Himself will be our judge. Let us condemn what truth condemns fully, but no more : forty stripes. Let this be done carefully, considerately, let the dying slave live a day or two ; and as the appearance dies away, spiritual wisdom enters in and will be yours in his stead. He will be your silver.

SERMON XXIV.

SEETHING THE KID IN THE MOTHER'S MILK.

"Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk."—Exodus xxiii. 19.

We gave on a former occasion, a somewhat full consideration to the divine regulations in the preceding chapter, which constitute the laws concerning oxen. We endeavoured to acquire from them that divine wisdom in relation to the principle in the human mind, of plodding determination to go aright in the ways and walks of heavenly duty, of which the ox is the figure in the Word of God. In this respect we had an illustration of the divine declaration, "The words of the Lord are pure words," "The law of the Lord is everywhere perfect converting the soul." We propose to carry out a similar consideration with the text before us. As to its letter, a reader who has no idea of the sublime difference between the Word of God and the word of man, might ask, what can there be worthy of consideration in such a declaration as this, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk?" what can it be to me in my upward progress towards heaven; or, indeed, of what importance can it be to anybody, to know how the kid was to be seethed; or in what way this animal was to be boiled, or prepared either for ordinary food or for sacrifice? Yet we may rest assured that here, as everywhere, the true description of the Word of the Lord, is like that which was given of the incarnate Word, "Never man spake like this man. "Never book was written like this Book." Let us here enquire what is to be understood in the Sacred Volume by the kid, the milk of the goat, and what by the duty declared here of not seething the kid in his mother's milk. That the divine word uses this

sacred symbol for the purpose of representing spiritual principles, any one who carefully reads the Sacred Volume will readily perceive. It is so in relation to sheep and oxen.

But that it is so in relation to other animals, we shall fully admit, if we bear in mind such a declaration as that, for instance, in Ezekiel xxxvi. 17, "I, even I, saith the Lord, judge between cattle and cattle, and between the rams and the he-goats," We cannot fail to observe that inasmuch as the Lord describes Himself as one who is taking care of His flock, and is about to descend upon earth and rescue His flock, that when He says, "I will judge between the rams and the he-goats," He is informing us that He will judge between those who are represented by those animals, and not concerning the beasts themselves. We have again in Matthew xxv., in the Lord's description of Himself sitting as on the throne in judgment, and all nations being before Him, the sheep on His right hand and the goats at His left, a similar description, but with this additional advantage, that He describes who the sheep are and who the goats, when He says, the sheep are those who have performed works of charity and kindness: "When I was hungry, ye fed me, thirsty, ye gave me drink, sick, and in prison, ye visited me," and in explaining how this could be with those who had never seen Him, He says, "Because ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." Thus, the Saviour teaches precisely who they are that are represented by the sheep, and how it is that each person who possesses a little flock of gentle, kindly dispositions, has within him those very principles that will constitute him a minor shepherd with a spiritual flock. Such a one will be crowned and blessed by the Chief Shepherd when he meets him as the Divine Judge.

On the other hand, the goats are described as those, who, although they were right as far as their views, their doctrines, their principles of faith went, were still wanting in those principles of love and charity, which are always greeted with the divine blessing." It is precisely so you will find with other animals; they are descriptive also of other principles of the soul. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God."

There are in the divine sight, human beings whose varied affections are represented by all the animals which exist. There are some, who staid and plodding, are attentive to the various duties of daily christian life, but who aspire and yearn but little after the higher things of heaven. They are God's fat

cattle: they like to browse in the pastures, but do not ascend in their perception of heavenly things. There are others who are like the gazelles of the Most High, that delight in going up to the hills of heaven. These have grand scenery. They love grand views. They rejoice in the sunlight of God's higher wisdom.

The goats are representative of such as are between these two. Goats enjoy rocky hill-sides. They delight in skipping from rock to rock on the mountain, but do not often go to the top. They represent those who delight sometimes in principles of duty. Sometimes on the contrary, they represent those who know the truth, but do not act up to it. In the latter case they represent the goats that are condemned; in the former, they represent the goats that may be used in sacrifices.

In the Paschal Supper, and on various occasions in the Israelitish ritual, you will find that the goat was used as an offering to the Lord, as well as the lamb. The goat represents faith: the kid, the innocence of a new faith.

The goat, then, is a symbol in the Sacred Word, both from its hard, hairy coat, from its horns, and, especially, from its aptitude to play about the hill-sides, and leap from rock to rock, of the mind of one who endeavours to become familiar with and delight in the things of faith. The spiritual rocks are the grand principles of truth, each one is like a rock upon which the soul can build. The Lord himself being the grand quarry from which all the rocks of truth are hewn "Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn," the Lord says on one occasion, "to the hole of the rock where ye have been digged." "He is the Head Stone of the corner." "The Rock of Israel." And, those, therefore, who delight in thinking about His divine nature, His divine works, His divine teachings, concerning Himself and heaven and eternal life, are precisely like the goats that dance, as it were, from one rock to another, and rejoice in spiritual freedom and strength.

When the kid is spoken of, it is representative of the same thing as the goat but in a more interior, pure and exalted state. The goat is the mother. The kid—a new birth from the mother, is representative of faith, as it is when we first feel religion to be vital with us. When we livingly know that we have an immortal soul, an immortal future, and an eternal home—that life is a sublime career to prepare us on earth for happiness in heaven:—when these things come home to us, and we have a strong, fixed, and living conviction that this new living faith is a divine thing, we possess one of the Lord's kids of the goats.

And this is no mean excellence. It is a divine virtue. If we join it to other virtues, we shall find it is blessed and rewarded by the Most High.

But religion ought to be with us a living and progressive thing. There is, unhappily, a great tendency in the human mind to rest after having made exertion—a tendency too much to repose upon past efforts. When we have once realized divine things, and have become Christians, and have felt a heavenly faith within our souls, there is a great tendency to suppose that all has been done that needs to be done ; that now we have stepped over from the line of the enemies of God, and are on the right side, we may, therefore, rest upon our oars and be quiet. But, "Woe unto them," says the Prophet, "that are at ease in Zion, that have been settled upon their lees from their youth, and have not been emptied out from vessel to vessel." Such souls, like metals that are not used, become rusty. They fall back upon past things, and forget that this world is not a continuing city, is only a place in which we are to work out our salvation constantly from stage to stage. Our goats should be fruitful goats—they should have kids—or in other words, in relation to our states of faith, as well as in relation to our states of heart and life, we should perpetually be going on to things newer, better, diviner, more exalted, "Ye must be born again," is true of the whole mind. If this is not the case we sink into a state of backwardness, after a while we do not even keep our footing, but descend lower and lower until all becomes flat, stale, unprofitable, and dead within us.

Our first condition as to faith is one necessarily of a very imperfect character ; our first goat—our first state of intellectual advancement, our first creed, is necessarily mixed up with a variety of misunderstandings and mistakes which we ought to leave after a while behind. The Apostle says, "When I was a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, I spake as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things." Now, it is just so with everyone as to his state of faith. At first the secret thought of all is, that the Lord is much such a being as themselves—only all powerful ; that he looks at men with the vengeance of a severe judge or executioner ; and that he will punish if they will not repent ; and from fear of this punishment, in a state of fear only, with but little pure love of what is good, with but little even of an interior sight of what is true, but with fear of punishment, and hope of reward, we are stirred at first out of sin.

We are spiritual hirelings. For a considerable time our religion is the religion of fear, that is, the religion of a moderated selfishness. The Apostle John when describing this state and its consequences says "In fear there is torment ; but perfect love casteth out fear." These first religious impressions, which are those of this mistaken external character, and but a moderated selfishness, are much blended with self-complacency, and even self-righteousness. We look with a somewhat condemnatory feeling upon the state of others. We not only wish others to become better, but we often are very strong for having them improved in our particular way, or not at all. This state is represented by the milk of the mother. It is an impure state, a state of low, narrow and tormenting religion. It is a disposition to look back. It is a great care for creed and little for christianity. **THIS IS TO SEETHE THE KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK.**

When from meditation, love, and prayer, we have a tenderer and purer faith, it is more genial and comprehensive. We begin to find that God is not only the God of past ages, but the living God—our God. We have states of love, of innocence and faith. We are convinced indeed, that the Lord not only watched over the Israelites, and took care of them through the wilderness, providing for all their necessities, but that he has provided also for ours, and for those of all men and all ages. We are sure that the Lord redeemed Israel, and we are not the less sure that He has redeemed us. He guided Israel, and He guides us. He spoke to Israel, and He speaks to us with a living voice in His Word, and in our souls. The pillar of cloud led His ancient servants by day, and the pillar of fire by night, and His Word and His love as surely guide us in our brightest and darkest hours. He is a living God, and our Saviour, as certainly as he was the Saviour of any beings or nations that ever lived. When our faith has acquired this living vital character, our goat has then a kid, or in other words, we have a state of inward faith, purer, higher, truer, diviner than before. The Lord intends in our text to teach us, that we should follow in this course, and not turn back. We must not have this kid seethed in its mother's milk. We must advance, not looking to old forms, creeds, or facts, but look to our own states and the Lord's goodness to us—feel that religion is a real thing, and its divine history is being re-enacted in us. We have spiritual enemies to battle with and to overcome, the Lord must be a Divine Conqueror in us. He is the Sun of the soul to-day, to

warm us with His love. To-day He defends us with His truth, and gives us power to fight against our everyday evils and to heal our present sorrows. Thus He brings us into the image and likeness of Himself. When this is the case we are not preparing our kid in its mother's milk, that is, not with old, partly true and partly false impressions, but with the living states of holy faith, which spring up fresh and warm, in humble, but loving hearts and minds.

In such case this divine lesson comes home to us with power, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk."

Allow me further to call your attention to the apparent disconnectedness of this divine declaration, and to draw your attention to one of the perfections, though a seeming imperfection of the Holy Word.

Observe how little of coherency appears between this law and those which precede and follow it. It is in immediate connection with the precepts, "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning." "The first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." It is scarcely possible, looking at the matter from the outside, to conceive anything apparently less connected than these precepts.

One might ask, what has the kid or its mother to do with bringing the first fruits of the land into the house of the Lord? and what has this to do with not suffering the fat of the sacrifice or "Feast," as it would be better rendered, "to remain until the morning," or "from the night until the morning?" Yet disconnected as these regulations appear to be, looking only at the letter, if we regard them as they are beneath the letter, we shall find they are all in the closest connection, and have the truest and most divine coherence. They form an illustration in this respect of the same truth as was exhibited in the Lord's garments. The outer garments of the Word made flesh were separate, and the soldiers divided them amongst them; but the inner robe was woven all of a piece from the top downwards, representative of this very fact, that the outer part or letter of the word is varied in its style, and the soldiers of religion, like the Roman soldiers, take the piece that suits them. They divide its outer garments, but the spiritual sense, the inner divine lesson is woven all of a piece. It glows from the first to the last with admirable divine order throughout the Sacred Volume of Revelation. Viewing the subject in this light you

will easily see that each one of these particulars, apparently without coherency or connection, is precisely a declaration of smaller portions of the same great truth. It is what we have said before, namely, that the Lord's will is continual progression in the regenerate life. Not that our future states should be merely a renewal, as it were, of our former ones—simply reclining upon what has happened to us in days gone by, but that the Lord should be our living God and Saviour every day. Hence, it is said, "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread." Leaven being a bitter substance derived from previous fermentation, would represent the falsehood of a decayed system. "Neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning," that is, we should worship the Lord from celestial love now, and earnestly; not wait for another opportunity. Neither look behind or before, but do your duty now is the spirit of the Divine Law.

When we come to worship the Lord,—when, for instance, on Sabbath morning, or each day we offer up the sacrifice of our hearts and feelings, we should not do so from habit or custom, or command; not from old creeds or councils, nor because it has been the practice of the church in past ages, and so must be right, but, because we feel that we are the children of the living God, and have enjoyed His daily mercies. We live in His glorious world below; we are to live in His more glorious world above. The Lord seeks to conjoin us with Himself, that He may impart to us purity, and peace, and joy now. We have a sacrifice to offer, we have the hopes and joys and desires of our soul; we have need of His strength and blessing to-day, and, therefore, we will offer up to him our worship and seek from Him, the living God, to have His blessing now. In the same way, when it is said, "The fat of my feast shall not be kept from the night until the morning," it is to teach us that the inward joy, the real delight, which is represented by the richness of the fat, (as we have it spoken of in Isaiah lv., when the Lord says, "Come unto me and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness") is not to be deferred. Come with holy joy now; do not draw near with the conviction of old states; do not endeavour to be, as it were, heedless and helpless during the course of the week, and then, on the Sunday, think how happy you once felt, but come now. A whole universe of bliss is around you, waiting the opening of grateful hearts and minds to pour in and bless you. Think that you are going to meet the living God. Feel that

you are drawing near to have a holy feast, and desire to realize then and there the sacred state that is described in Psalm xxiii, "Thou hast spread a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, thou hast annointed my head with oil : my cup runneth over." When the heart is in that state of loving, warm affection which seeks to know the Lord now, which yearns to eat of His flesh, and drink of His blood now, that burns to be in communion with him and his angels now,—when this is the case, the fat of His sacrifice is not kept from the night until the morning ; but there is a beautiful and holy fire in our hearts, and the incense of a sweet savour arises to heaven. We eat that which is good, and our souls delight themselves in fatness. It is the same thing that is taught in the next precept. "Thy first fruits shall be brought into the house of the Lord." That is to say, each new state, each new generation of what is true and good, each holy thought, each dawn of a new harvest, should be regarded as from the Lord of heaven and earth, as completely as the several parts of the Bible were in days gone by. It is the Lord helping us to have "First the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." In this way you perceive all these precepts have some truth to teach, some lesson to give.

Put off old states, do not be for ever looking behind ; but go forward to those things that are before. Seek to have opened up new flesh of inward purity, and get new thoughts of clear and holy faith, new experiences of states of inward joy and delight, and in this way you will be able to take up the Divine language of Psalm ciii., "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his Holy Name. He reneweth thy youth like the eagle's. His mercies are fresh every morning." Each new state is a new gift. He is not the God of the past only, but the God of the present. He blesses us, saves us, enlightens us, gives us the victory in all our daily efforts, over whatever would depress, whatever would deprave, whatever would sensualize ; and enables us to become ever more and more angel-like, God-like,—never seething the kid in its mother's milk, but always getting fresh milk, of that kind of which the apostle Peter speaks, when he says, "I have fed you with the sincere milk of the Word that ye might grow thereby."

SERMON XXV.

DRIVING OUT OUR ENEMIES LITTLE BY LITTLE.

"I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."—Exodus xxiii. 28, 29, 30.

There are fallacies of a most dangerous character that tend seriously to interfere with our preparation for heaven. The first to which we would refer is the fallacy of the worldly man; the second is the fallacy of the religious man; the third is the fallacy of the heedless man;—of him who neglects the solemn and constant teaching of the Word of the Lord to all of us.

The first fallacy, the fallacy of the worldly man, results from his short-sighted notion that this world is his all; that he has been born here, that he lives here as the animals do, and then he dies. His short life of vexation and of joy, of triumph and of toil being over, he goes to sleep. We should find that almost every person if he was taxed with this notion in those precise terms, would say,—that is not a true description of my views of things. And yet in the perpetual run of daily life, you will find that the thoughts of pretty nearly ninety-nine men out of every hundred are very accurately measured by that description. How few there are who act from the living conviction that every day is given us on earth to prepare for a happy condition in the eternal world. The young man is too often of the earth, earthy. It is not so with children. Children are honest, ingenuous, truth-loving, and disposed to heavenly things. Speak to a child of the blessed arrangements of the kingdom of heaven, of its being made to live for ever, of the way in which it should act in order to be happy, and because the child has had a little stock of heavenly excellencies sown in it by the Lord to begin with, it sits and listens, and it loves to hear of all the blessed things that occur in heaven without any disbelief or doubt. "Their angels do always behold the face of my father

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who is in heaven." And their angels suggest, and the little heart takes in the holy teachings, the things that belong to its peace ; and the little heart rises often in thankful love to the God of Heaven, and rejoices that it has been made to be an angel. But after a while the ruder parts of our fallen nature come out. As the youth increases in stature, heaven withdraws into the recesses of the soul, earth comes out more and more, until after a while, the young man more or less gets into disorder, and if not into direct evils, he goes into that entire worldliness that leads him to imagine that to get on in this world is all for which he really needs be anxious ; that to get a first-rate income, a goodly house and fortune that will enable him to make a figure in the world, and gratify his propensities—this is the great aim of his life. This continues more or less for a large portion of life with the vast mass of human beings. They toil and they struggle. They live perhaps so that they do not call down upon themselves the condemnation of their friends, and their neighbours and society ; but everything within that, every little mode of pursuing the selfish aims by which they hope to become distinguished, powerful and wealthy :—to gratify themselves, and to secure the advantages that they seek in mere pleasurable life in the world—all these things continue to be the great aims of their lives. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and although all experience testifies against this world-wide folly, although even in living thus, the mind is filled with anxiety, filled often with self-condemnation, even filled with disappointment, distress, and misery ; feeling how wretched a thing it is still to go on having no noble aim, with toil and trouble, often with heart-wretchedness and misery unspeakable, until at last, when the life chequered with great misery and little pleasure comes to an end, the common idea is,—Well it is all over now, poor fellow, we have done with him, and he has done with himself.

But is it so ? It is the merest fallacy. It is not all over then. Death is but the gate to the real life, to which this is only the preparation. If the poor creature has gone on year after year, still acting from the same selfish principles, from the same worldly wisdom which is the bitterest folly, still living in the same anxious wretchedness until he has become a burden to himself and to others, sometimes so great that he has laid violent hands upon himself, because he cannot bear himself any longer—is it all over with him ? Ah no ! He has taken himself with him

wherever he has gone. He has taken all his evils, increased by his mistaken and fretful life of folly ; and just as it is with the good man—he who has used his two talents gets other two, he who has wisely used his five talents gets other five—just as a man who is wise here is a thousand times more wise there, and a person who is loving here is a thousand times more loving in the spirit-world, and a person whose love has been brought into a state of heavenly harmony here is in a far more blessed harmony with the heavenly world, just so is it with the converse. The man whose soul is selfish enough to desire to grasp everything in this world, becomes still more tremendously selfish in the eternal world. The man who has sought every sensual indulgence here is a thousand times more disposed to go against divine order there, and as the curbs, and bridles, and hindrances that he had in this life chafed him, so the condition of things in the eternal world, becomes a thousand times more painful. He could bear truth but little here, but truth is the light of that world, and its brightness tortures him to madness. True heavenly love was painfully uncongenial to him here, but how will he bear the glorious spheres of angels ? For every painful sting that he has had here, he will have a thousand flashing pureties which will be as whips and scorpions there. Every spiritual law of the universe will be against him. “He who is filthy shall be filthy still, and he that is righteous shall be righteous still.” This is the eternal law for man, both religious and irreligious.

Secondly, there is the fallacy of the religious. This is a still more extensive and stubborn one in the world than the other. The yearnings of the soul are too strong in multitudes of men to allow them to be altogether indifferent, yet their evils are too much loved to be thoroughly given up. Hence come skin-deep religions. There must be a make-believe of something being done. Hence come superficial teachers who meet the demand, and perhaps themselves partake of the character, and say, man is saved by a belief or by a ceremony. These tell us, if a man with frenzied agony will say,—The Lord Jesus Christ died for him—his religious business will be done. Should he die immediately after conversion, he will then come into the eternal world to enter into all the enjoyments of heaven.

We have denominated this skin-deep religion. It makes scarcely any alteration in the human character except a superficial one. The converted person attends some religious meeting and conforms to the means of grace. He uses another

style of words and does nothing which is not respectable amongst religious people. He is considered to be in a very proper state of mind, and is sure of heaven as soon as he dies. Yet when the first fervour of religious zeal is over, and we have an opportunity of seeing such persons in their actual dispositions, they are sometimes found as greedy, as selfish, as unpleasant to live with, as unhappy in their temper, as anxious, as pining, as mopish, and melancholy, as any of those who have never professed to believe.

These suppose themselves to be entirely in possession of the means of salvation and happiness ; yet so little are they really happy, that they are amongst those who are perpetually fearing, hoping, wishing and desiring that somehow, and by some means, they shall get the assurance that they will enter heaven. They entirely overlook the great fact, that the kingdom of heaven must be within, or it will never be around us. The kingdom of heaven consists in a heavenly state of heart and mind and life. "The kingdom of God," says the Apostle, "is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." He who does not possess these things, he who is not holy in his thoughts, and feelings, and sentiments, and habits ; he who does not rejoice in keeping the Lord's commandments ; he who is not heavenly and happy here, will not be heavenly or happy hereafter.

"Keep the commandments !" say the religious teachers of skin-deep religion, why it is not to be done—nobody can do it. That very saying is itself the condemnation of all such forms of religion. Religions that do not convert a person to keep the commandments ; that do not raise him up to such a state of loving earnestness in his religious work, that the keeping of the commandments is not only not hard to him but is delightful—such a religion has little real value. A person who says, I am a religious man, I believe this, that, and the other, and yet I cannot keep the commandments—nobody can—is, himself, uttering the condemnation of his own religion. What does the Apostle say on the subject ? "This is the love of God that ye keep his commandments ; and his commandments are not grievous." They are very grievous, to a person of the class we have named, and are very hard and difficult. He could keep the commandments well enough if they would bring him in forty per cent ; he could keep the commandments well enough if they would allow him to do everything he likes. It is because there are so many things that he loves, and which the commandments forbid, that

he finds it so difficult to keep them. He is not earnest in his determination to do it. He loves his appetites, his desires, his preferences, his own way, rather than God's way ;—therefore, it is difficult for him to keep the commandments.

Why, of course, a person cannot blow hot and cold at the same time—he cannot be black and white at the same time—he cannot be angel and devil at the same time—selfish and full of heavenly love at the same time. If he will keep his selfishness, if he will hold to his sin, if he determine to be still worldly, full of the greed of gain, it will be hard for him to keep the commandments. He does not mean to keep them. But if, on the other hand, he bears in mind that the great business of life is for a man to become good, whether he gains by it or loses by it,—to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and to let everything else take its place—to leave to Divine Providence how much or how little of this world's goods we have—to carry out earnestly the great aim of becoming loving servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and companions of those that are good—in such a case a man will dwell in love, and dwelling in love he will dwell in God. Perfect love will cast out fear. And oh! what a change is this from that corrupt and evil state of the fallen heart that man has before religion begins its work? It is a change as complete as that which is set before us in the Divine Word here and elsewhere.

Canaan is first represented as inhabited by people unspeakably corrupted; guilty of every polluted practice—worshipping Moloch and Baal, and Ashtaroth—giving way to nameless abominations. Compare that with Canaan in the time of Solomon, when all was peaceable, pure and orderly; when the glorious temple of the living God was seen to shed its lustre over the whole land. The change from the one condition to the other, and its religious significance, is the subject before us.

This country, Canaan, as it was when the Divine Being ordered the Israelites to advance and take possession of it, is the image of the unregenerate heart. The three peoples who are named here, the Hivite, the Canaanite and the Hittite, as we have shown on former occasions, are each representative of the leading evils of the unregenerate heart. The driving of them out by little and little, is representative of the only way in which evils can be extirpated, and heaven descend into the human heart and character. And these different nations are representations of specific evils. We will dwell a little upon them, and shall then see how beautifully they figure to us the

work which we have to do. It is said, "And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee." The Hivite was a nation or tribe inhabiting the north of the land of Judah—the part in the immediate neighbourhood of Jericho and Ai, into which Joshua led the armies of the Israelites upon their first taking possession after crossing Jordan. They were a people of a peculiar character, not by any means the worst of the people of the land. They were disposed to do as other people did. When they found that Joshua and the Israelites were the conquering party, they are introduced to us, in the early part of the book of Joshua, as in a very wily manner pretending to have been sent as ambassadors from a country a long way off. They were perfectly willing to do as Joshua and the host required, and the result was, that they entered into a covenant, and were ordered to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, and to be protected so long as they conformed to the manners of the Israelites. They are, therefore, representative of that disposition of outward conformity to a religious life, which is simply the result of imitation, and not of conviction; not of a deep-rooted sense that we must be born-again, and live for the kingdom of heaven. This disposition is found in a large number of people who are prepared to do as other people do, and when it is the fashion to be religious, they will be religious too, particularly if it is a profitable thing to do. These are the spiritual Hivites. Such states of mind never have the peace of real religion, they are of that class of feelings which have neither the pleasure of sin, nor the delights of religion. A person of this class is a spiritual nonentity—a kind of religious nobody, who neither goes boldly into sin, and has the pleasures of ungodliness, nor goes earnestly into religion and leads the life of heaven. He has the restrictions, the bridle of religion, an obsequiousness, to the requirements of religion, and yet inwardly his heart is not good in the sight of the Lord.

It is said that hornets should be sent upon them. Some writers (and there are indications which would seem to support this view) conceive that one of the means of clearing the promised land was by means of immense swarms of hornets—those terrible little animals that sting, and torment those whom they pester: but whether that be so or not, the hornet and its sting are representative, in the Divine Word, of the stings and pains of soul that come from not being really devoted to what is good and true; of the disappointments, the miseries, the petty frettings,

and continual annoyances which occur with those who have not subdued their tempers to the celestial rule of loving the Lord above all things, and their neighbour as themselves. These, whenever the divine power, the power of religion, is brought to bear upon them, feel a smart like the hornet's sting that wounded the Hivites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites spoken of here. There are always hornets with such people, achings of heart, continual affliction from time to time. They are at war with themselves. Their lives are a continual fret : there is with them no solid happiness. Everything that is right tends to pain them. These pains are the stings of the spiritual hornets that have to be endured. They are said to be sent by the Lord, first, because it so appears to the evil, and secondly, because He does sustain the laws from which these effects follow.

It is said, the Canaanites also ; for by the Canaanites are meant the dispositions to downright sin.

The moment that Joshua and his people showed themselves in the land of Canaan, five kings of the Canaanites, headed by Adonibezek, gathered together and came forward to oppose them, and there was a terrible battle.

Adonibezek was a thoroughly heartless tyrant, who is said to have had seventy-two kings captive under his table, with hands and feet mutilated, there to receive the insults and the crumbs of this miserable monarch, whose name accurately describes what sort of being he was ; "Adoni" lord, "besek" fetters—the Lord of fetters. This bad king with his people, the Canaanites, are representative of self-love with its terrible companion-passions, envy, hatred, lust, and all the abominations of the false heart ; which cared nothing for maintaining peace with Joshua, but ever and anon, whenever they can, and by every means in their power, will ruthlessly oppose the progress of heavenly principles. To represent this condition of heart, with all its bad passions, the Canaanites come up from time to time in the divine history, until at length, at the end of the prophecy of Ezekiel, where the more glorious state of things of the kingdom of the Lord are spoken of, and long after every literal Canaanite had been blotted out from the face of the land, it is said, "There shall no more be a Canaanite in the House of the Lord of Hosts." There is "no more a Canaanite" when there is no more selfish, hostile, hateful, opposition to the hand of heaven.

The Hittites, or children of Heth, were the old inhabitants of the country. They inhabited what afterwards became the south

of Judah. From them Abraham bought the ground in which the body of Sarah was interred. They retained in Canaan the remains of a grand church which had once spread over the East, the ancient church whose doctrines had been pure but were now perverted. The names of places in their country, such as Debir—the Word, and many others, all indicate that true religion had once shone over that region. Now, however, all was perverted. Hence, the Hittites represent the principles of a perverted religion, claiming a divine authority and resisting change, although all their religion is a mere cover and pretence. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. They love, therefore, dark and mysterious dogmas. They proclaim these loudly, and say, they are veritable for their antiquity. Their fathers believed them, and, therefore, they must be true. They do not trouble themselves about change of heart, nor about what is true or what is false, but struggle for the maintenance of solemn mockeries, notwithstanding the utter failure of these to remove either sin or sorrow.

These three things, then, have to be driven out of the soul. Conformity to the world; the evils of the heart; and the false views of the intellect. As these are expelled, the soul will have peace. Only, however, by little and little can this be done. Not that we must be heedless, easy, and indifferent about it, and do little when we could do much. But, on the contrary, we must labour, strive, agonize, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to become renewed in heart, mind and life, and neither despair nor be impatient if we find our progress much slower than we had hoped. We can leave outward sin at once, and we must do so. There is no change at all without that. There must be no paltering with outward evil. But there are crowds of inward sins, inward follies and weaknesses, for our iniquities are more than the hairs of our heads, and often when we suppose they have all been expelled we shall find them in force once more. But we must take courage, fight the good fight, day by day, in the Lord's strength, and with grateful faith in Him, and by little and little all that is evil will be expelled, and we shall be renewed in all that is good. If we die while the contest is going on, we are on the Lord's side, and shall go to His kingdom. Our aim was the complete triumph of the Lord, and that in the other life will give the character to the whole man, that is, the whole angel.

SERMON XXVI.

THE TABERNACLE FOR THE SANCTUARY.

“And let them make me a sanctuary ; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”—Exodus xxv. 8, 9.

The Tabernacle of the testimony was the centre of Jewish worship. It was the sun and moon of the camp. All the tribes had their position in relation to it. When it was borne forward by the priests the people followed ; when it was fixed the people stayed. It must have been a glorious object, not only because it was made of the costliest offerings of the nation, but because of that wondrous pillar of cloud which visibly covered it by day, and the pillar of fire which was seen over it by night. It was the palladium of the people, the visible sign of the presence and protection of the Almighty. It was the symbol of heaven, of the church, and of the human soul. Hence, the reason of the divine injunction respecting not only the making, but the manner of it. “And look that thou make them after their pattern which was shewed thee in the mount.”—v. 40.

This Tabernacle was a glorious thing for its costliness as an offering of the new-born nation. For so poor a people to bring the costly offerings, not of their spare riches, but of their personal adornments in the Wilderness, indicates a sense of gratitude delightful to contemplate. The Tabernacle was also a beautiful object. Glittering with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, with its curtains covered with cherubim, it must have appeared to the newly freed slaves of Israel, and compared with their own plain black tents, the perfection of beauty. Its highest interest, however, is its spiritual one. It was a pattern of the Lord's Humanity, of the heavens, of the church ; a pattern given by the Lord Himself. The reference it has to the person

of our Saviour we will consider on a future occasion. Let me ask your best attention while we consider the lessons unfolded to our minds by the contemplation of its various parts in their relation to heaven, the church, and man.

The resemblance to heaven was, first, in the general outline of the Tabernacle. There are three heavens as the apostle Paul intimates, (2 Cor. xii. 2,) and the Tabernacle was divided into three,—the holy of holies, the holy place, and the court: in this respect exhibiting the general order that reigns in all things. Nature is ever threefold. We have suns, planets, and satellites. In relation to our world we have the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. So in the heavenly world, as testified by this pattern of heavenly things, there is the highest heaven, the middle, and the lowest. The holy of holies in the eternal world is the abode of the celestial angels, the holy place is the abode of the spiritual angels, and the court of heaven is the abode of those who may be called angels of obedience, the lowest inhabitants of the kingdom of God.

The same general divisions of the realms of the blest are indicated all over the Scriptures, and follow from the very states of the regenerate life. Solomon said in his prayer, "The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," implying the three heavens at least. In the book of Revelations there are the living ones in the midst of the throne, (the throne representing heaven, as here the Tabernacle, the midst representing the inmost of heaven) the four-and-twenty elders having harps of gold; and thirdly, the ten thousand times ten thousand standing round about the throne, all having been redeemed by the Lamb, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.—Rev. v. 9. The same general division is intimated in the results of the heavenly sowing as taught by our Lord, where He says of those who hear the Word, understand it, and bring forth fruit, there are some who bring forth a hundred fold, some sixty and some thirty.—Matt. xiii. 23. There are angels of love, those ministers of the King of saints who are said to be a flaming fire.—Ps. 104. There are angels of truth, white-robed ones who rejoice more especially in the light; and there are angels of lower uses, who fill the lower mansions of the blest; for in our Father's house there are many mansions.—John xiv. 2. This general truth is clearly indicated by the Tabernacle being threefold.

But heaven is the Lord's church above; the church is the Lord's heaven on earth. Hence, that which is the pattern of

the one is also the pattern of the other. The measure of a man, is the measure of an angel.—Rev. xxi. 17.

The church on earth is the Lord's sanctuary where He dwells among His people, though they have not all the privileges of the church in heaven. And the church is likened justly by the apostle Paul to the body of the Lord. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."—1 Cor. xii. 27. And in the human form we have a threefold division,—the head, the trunk, and the lower members. So in the church, there are christians of higher and lower talents, experience, and attainments. "The eye cannot say unto the hand I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet I have no need of you."—1 Cor. xii. 21. But, undoubtedly, such distinctions exist, both on earth, and in heaven. Each person is arranged by the Lord to render services to His great kingdom, where he can best conduce to the well-being of the whole vast body. The Apostle describes this in another place, when he says, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation 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; in whom ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."—Eph. ii. 19, 22.

If we notice the different general degrees of the regenerate life, we shall find they illustrate the truth we are now endeavouring to explain. For when we begin the work of religion how low are our conceptions of christian duty. We know generally the requirements of the letter of the commandments, and of the letter of the Word, and we aim at keeping them. It is not, however, from any enlightened view of them, but from a spirit of obedience. "Thus, saith the Lord," is our law, and so it ought to be. But our view is very confined, and our experience very shallow. The Lord accepts our offering though it is coarse. We are men of the outer court. And if we die in this state, the outer court of the heavens will be our eternal home. We shall have no idea probably of any higher happiness than that which we have attained, but in reality we are but in the threshold of eternal bliss. Men of obedience only, are men of the outer court. They who had only a right to the outer court, never saw the brightness of the lights of the golden lamps in the holy place, much less the splendours of the Divine Light in the Most Holy. But, still they were Israelites, and accepted, and blessed, according to their measure.

In the outer court were two things ; the laver of brass, containing water to wash, and the altar of brass for sacrifice ; and christians of the outer court must wash and must sacrifice. Without these duties being performed by him no man is a christian at all. "If I wash thee not," said the Lord to Peter, "thou hast no part in me."—John xiii, 8. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well."—Isa. i. 16, 17. We must sacrifice also ; "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."—Ps. li. 17. These things are essential to all christians ; all enter first the outer court. We must faithfully do the work of purification in daily life, washing our feet, and aiding in the washing of one anothers feet, or we can never be elevated by the Lord to the higher states of the regenerate life. We are first people, then priests. First we tread the outer courts of religion, and wash, and sacrifice, and when we have done this thoroughly, the Lord makes us priests and we may enter into the holy place.

It must be confessed that christians in general have a very low and indistinct idea of the duties and requirements of the outer court. They have been so used to hear that no one can keep the commandments, and that salvation comes by revivalist feelings, that the religious state of a large number of professing christians falls far short of washing and sacrificing. Yet it remains an eternal truth that we cannot enter heaven without a thorough change of motives, thoughts and life. "Except a man be born again of water and the spirit," (or of truth and love) "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John iii. 5. He must become a new man. Through the love of God our Saviour, he is accepted at first from pure mercy, and "saved by the WASHING of REGENERATION, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."—Tit. iii. 5. But he must be washed. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee."—Jer. iv. 14. We must wash often in this outer department of our lives. The work of purification even of the outer life is not one single effort, but a daily and constantly reiterated exertion. We must say like the Psalmist, "Wash me *often* from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."—Ps. li. 2. Our obedience will be very imperfect, our walk tottering. Our garments will many a time be spotted by our contact with the world, and the taints of our hereditary defilement, but we must wash again and again in the fountain of Divine Wisdom, the blood of the Lamb, and the time will

come when the gracious words of our Lord will be heard, "Ye have not defiled your garments, ye shall walk with me in white." Rev. iii. 4. This washing was prefigured by the washing of the Jew in the outer court.

There was also the sacrifice and the offering which had to be performed also in the outer court : the taking of the animal's life, and then the offering by fire. A corresponding work is required of every sincere penitent. The tone, the spirit, the life of his mind must be changed. There is a life that must be lost. "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake," the Lord said, "the same shall save it."—Luke ix. 24. The inner life of the unregenerate man is largely selfish. Self rules in the natural mind. However it may masquerade in different disguises, vile self is there. He may appear generous, devoted, courteous, a kind friend, a good citizen, an excellent neighbour, an active patriot, a man distinguished in science or in letters, and a profound philosopher, yet divine light will disclose to him, when he desires to see himself in the rays of divine truth, an interior pride, a vanity, a selfishness of heart which will make him humble and loathe himself in the presence of Divine Purity. This life must be sacrificed. This serpent must have its head bruised that we may become Israelites indeed. These are the works of the outer court. They must be done there faithfully, humbly, truly, or we cannot realize the blessings even of that comparatively external condition of the religious life, and be christians of the outer court of the Sanctuary.

There is a remarkable declaration of the book of Revelation concerning these times. "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles ; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months," (three years and a half.)—Rev. xi. 2. Since religion has been doctrinally and practically separated from life, and been made to consist only in faith and feelings, the outer court has indeed been trodden under foot of the nations. Politics, business, marriage have been governed by motives altogether springing from self. The rulers of nations have not sought for righteousness, but for power, dominion, distinction and glory in the world. Self, self, self, has been their impelling aim. And what gigantic ruin and wide-spread misery has this trampling under foot of the outer court produced ! Desolated nations cry aloud, Oh, when will righteousness resume her sway, and red ambition sink and die, before that spirit of the Gospel which says, "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.

In social life, as a general rule, what has religion had to do with marriage except to perform the ceremony. How little has conscience sought a partner whose qualifications have been those calculated to shed religion on the home, to shine in the noble graces of the heart and mind, to become a fellow-angel. Sordid calculations of gain, the demands of ostentation, vanity, luxury, ambition, and even still more degrading motives, have defiled, and do defile, that holiest of all bonds among men; the outer court has been trodden under foot of the Gentiles. And what has been the result, universal heart-burning, incalculable misery. Happily, the forty and two months, the three years and a half, or in other words, the ending of one dispensation and the beginning of a better is now rapidly being realized. The religion of life is being unfolded anew. The outer court is being reclaimed. Men are coming once more to the washing and the sacrificing of the lowest department of the kingdom of God, and ere long we shall have a better world,—a God-governed society. Thus will be fulfilled the divine prophecy, "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof: and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."—Amos. ix. 11.

We have dwelt strenuously upon the restoration of the duties of the outer court, because the great crying want of the age is the restoration of religion in common life: the acknowledgement that every part of this world is God's world, and should be governed by God's laws. There is nothing merely secular. Everything has its religious side, and religious bearing upon our everlasting condition. Let this be felt, and lived, and loved, and religion will have a force in human life, a beauty and a blessedness of which it has too long been shorn. The good time coming will be realized, and justice, and judgment be the habitation of the Lord's throne on earth, as it is in heaven.

But we have only been describing the first great degree in the christian life; the degree of OBEDIENCE.

There is a second which is opened by the Lord when the first has been duly realized, it is the spiritual degree, and is meant by the holy place. This was a beautiful portion of the sanctuary. Here was the golden candlestick with its seven golden lamps. Here was the altar of incense, and table of shewbread. The priests went into the holy place, but not the common people.

The inner portion of the sanctuary, where the light of the

golden lamps was burning, represents the inner state of the mind where the light of heaven shines. It is the Lord's will that the soul should dwell in light. He teaches us to pray, "Send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead us to thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles." "Lighten thou mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death." Arise, shine," is His language, "for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has arisen upon thee." But this advance into light, is an advance into the spirit of the Holy Word.

When the christian is only in the outer courts his great aim is obedience. This is his motto. "Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." But when he has so far succeeded in his heavenly course that "The yoke is easy, and the burden light," he is prepared for the higher, inner spiritual state, and he yearns after understanding. "Open thou mine eyes" is his prayer "that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." The Word then is not only a rule of life, it is a treasury of thought. The inner truths then opened to the soul ardently desiring them, are "pearls of great price." The language of the soul, is "The entrance (opening) of thy Word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "Therefore, I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore, I esteem all thy precept concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." In this higher state, the struggles of the soul are not between obedience and disobedience, but between truth and falsity. It discerns truth to be man's heaven-sent friend, falsity to be a treacherous whirlpool where souls are involved and wrecked. It is tender for truth, courageous and firm against falsehood. To such a soul, falsehood is a pestilential miasma which suffocates thousands, he longs for the free air and healthful breezes of the atmosphere of heaven. He prays to be a child of the light, an inhabitant of the "city of God," where "the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof." In this holy place, this state of the holy love of truth, he who enters finds not only light but bread, the table of shew-bread is there, twelve loaves before the presence of the Lord. For, in this state, the Word feeds the soul with bread, "the bread of life." All the principles of goodness and truth are fed and strengthened from this table of the heavenly feast, and the christian is able to say again and again, "When I found thy words I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart." The altar of incense is

there also. From the altar of a warm affection for the Lord the Saviour, and the Truth, ascends continually the incense of prayer and praise. While the glory of truth floods the soul with light, from the altar of love ascends the grateful incense, "O give thanks unto the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." Those who have realized this state, are in the holy place. They are spiritual christians. And when they pass into the eternal world they become spiritual angels.

There is still a higher state meant by the holy of holies. The inmost sanctuary contained the ark, having the ten commandments on the two tables of stone within, and the mercy seat above it. It was lighted only by the presence of the Lord. The ark was of gold within and without, the mercy seat was of gold; the cherubims were of gold.

The state of the highest christians is here represented. They "dwell in love." Love is heavenly gold. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."—John iv. 16. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear."—v. 18. "The law is written on the hearts of these."—Jer. xxxi. 33. The new covenant is completed in them. Love reigns in them. They are in all things gentle, humble, sweet, tender. The little child of inmost innocence leads them. Their life, their joy, their exceeding great reward is "to do good." They form the seraphs of the heavenly kingdom, and dwell in the highest, the third heaven. Their state is the holy of holies. There the Lord meets with them, dwells with them, and gives them peace. They are in harmony with the light, but they rejoice more in the warmth than in the brilliancy of divine things. They see at a glance, or rather they feel and perceive what is right. Their communication is, yea, yea, and nay, nay. They are the holiest of the blessed, and rejoice for ever in the beatitudes of celestial love. They, after death, enter the celestial heaven.

Such are the lessons taught us in the contemplation of the Sanctuary, the pattern of things in the heavens. They teach us that religion is progressive. We must do the work of one state, and then we rise to a higher. We must not walk the plain only at the foot of the mount of God, but "ascend the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place."—Ps. xxiv. 3. And when we have done our work there, and been victorious in our spiritual conflicts, we must go still higher, to the very mountain top of celestial affection, to be for ever in the splendour of the glory of the Lord.

SERMON XXVII.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

“And they shall make an ark of shittim wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. And thou shalt make staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee.”—Exodus xxv. 10—16.

The Ark of the Covenant was a pattern of that state of the human soul in which the Most High deigns to dwell with man. This is taught clearly in the words preceding the description of the Ark, “Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee after the pattern of the tabernacle.”—v. 8, 9.

The extent of the mercy thus promised, can only be understood when we consider a little our position in creation. We are immortals, commencing our everlasting destiny. We have dangers, and fears, and anxieties. We see much that is fair and beautiful, but we also see many catastrophes. Things the most secure are sometimes shaken to their very foundations and pass away. Business changes, fortune fails, riches fade in our grasp, health gives way. We make ourselves as safe as we can, but unexpected troubles arise, and storms beat upon us within and without. Judging from our own feeble faculties, no condition is absolutely secure against calamity, and there is no entire immunity against sickness and death. In view of some of the dangers to which we are exposed, we should regard it as a great blessing if some powerful personage would assure us that

he would join his fortune to ours, that he would make a covenant with us, and that his wealth and power should be linked to our weakness, and ward off all such sorrows as come from want. If the friendly sustainer were a wealthy commoner we should no doubt rejoice ; if he were a powerful peer we should regard our bulwark as even more firmly fixed ; if he were a monarch we should regard ourselves as absolutely safe from one class of our fears. It might be even in that case that our fancied security would fail. Thrones have sunk and all who have been dependent on them. But in the covenant of which the Lord speaks to us, we are conjoining ourselves to the Eternal, the All-powerful, the Most High, the Creator and Governor of innumerable worlds. He deigns to undertake for us ; to make a covenant with us ; to surround us with His love and Mercy ; to shield us from all real harm, either to prevent the danger, or turn it to a benefit ; to make all things work together for our good. This covenant is to be an "everlasting covenant," ordered in all things and sure. The infinite riches of the Eternal Love and Wisdom are to be at our disposal as we need. God Himself will be our Father, our Saviour, our Friend, our Champion, our Defender. We shall dwell in His Universe as sons and daughters of its Maker,—the King of kings and Lord of lords. He offers to make this covenant with us, and all its advantages shall be ours. What a blessed privilege, what a glorious offer ! Let us hasten to consider the meaning of the terms, of which the Ark of the Covenant is the pattern, by which all these invaluable mercies can be made ours.

The word covenant is a sweet word, it speaks of conjunction and sympathy, and it implies help. It is a compound of "co" and "venant," and it means coming together. In the case before us, it is God and man coming together. The Ark was the pattern of the state by which this coming together can be realized. Notice, first, it is said, "They shall make an ark of shittim wood." The Lord is ever ready. His tender mercies are over all His works. He waits to be gracious. He gives power to man to make this Ark, and the sacred wood, the cedar of Shittah, of which it is to be constructed, is also His gift, but man must use this power, and co-operate with his adorable Maker. "They shall make an ark of shittim wood."

The wood of which the Ark was to be made was the most excellent of the cedars. It is called the cedar of Shittah by Isaiah, xli. 19, probably from the place where it grew. It is said to have been fragrant. No other wood was used in the

construction of the Tabernacle. All the parts made of timber were of shittim wood. The cedar, among the trees, corresponds to the rational faculty. It is a grand, powerful, and hardy tree. It is magnificent in its appearance, and it yields a protecting shade to all beneath it. It seems to stand, with outstretched arms and hands, the glory of the forest. The rational faculty of the human mind is just like the cedar tree. It extends in every direction, and takes the grandest views. A man who sees the reasons of things affords a protection to all around him. The ancient Assyrians were eagle-eyed men, and took soaring views of things, and in the Word they are called cedars. "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 ; the waters made him great." Ezek. xxxi. 3, 4.

When the Lord assumed our humanity, and thus brought His Divine Love and Mercy clearly within rational conception, His Humanity is represented as a CEDAR. "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.—Ezek. xvii. 22—24.

Here the Lord's Humanity is presented as the cedar, which should be planted in the mountain of the height of Israel ; that is, in the supreme affection of the Church, and afford protection to all that is humble, holy and excellent among men, exciting the admiration and adoration of all. The divine reason, as embodied in the Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, is, then, the glorious cedar, the cedar of cedars, and the Divine Human righteousness that grows up from Him in the human soul, is the shittim wood, out of which the Ark of the Covenant, and all the structure of the Tabernacle must be made. Goodness and truth in us, are the Lord in us. His righteousness, received by the angels and incorporated in them, makes heaven : His righteousness received by men, and incorporated in their souls, makes the Church. There is, therefore, no merit in angels, no merit in

men. The Lord's righteousness is made their righteousness, and by His righteousness they live. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17. Let us, however, not be misunderstood. It is not righteousness imputed only, but actual imparted righteousness we mean. It was real shittim wood out of which they were to make a real Ark of the Covenant, it was not a make-believe ark while the tree remained in the forest. From the infinite righteousness of the Lord Jesus, we must receive as much righteousness within, as our obedience to His commandments prepares us for, and He is pleased to come and dwell with us in what we have derived from Him: the cedar wood was His creation, and His gift, though they made it into an Ark.

The Lord explains this very simply in the gospel. "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.

The Ark, then, was the symbol of the inmost state of the soul, in which the Lord consciously dwells with His people, and the righteousness derived from Him, which constitutes its purity, is represented by the shittim wood.

This state of the soul is a little ark, and hidden wisdom constitutes its substance. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part (the inmost) thou shalt make me to know wisdom."—Ps. li. 6. The same state is described in the prophecy of Jeremiah. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."—xxx. 33.

The Ark was to be two cubits and a half in length, one cubit and a half in breadth, and one cubit and a half in height. The three measures signifying the goodness, the truth, and the holiness of this interior state. Length is taken from the course of the sun, and the Sun of righteousness progresses in the soul in proportion as it is in goodness; breadth is extension on each side, and breadth of mind is in proportion to our possession of truth: height represents extension upwards, and this is in proportion to our piety and interior holiness of character.

Two and a half, the length, like five its double, has relation to ten, the number of the commandments, and indicates the disposition within which will lead to perfect obedience. One and a half, the breadth and height, has relation to three, and like that number in the Word means completeness as to truth. These

measures of the Ark therefore represent that wise and holy state of the interior man, "the hidden man of the heart," as the Apostle calls it, which makes the renewed heart, disposing the Christian in all things to follow His Lord.

The Ark was to be overlaid with gold, "within and without," it is said, "thou shalt overlay it."—v. 11.

Gold represents love to the Lord, because this is of highest value among principles, as gold is among the metals. The coming Saviour said in Isaiah, "For brass I will bring gold."—lxi. 17. The same Divine Teacher in the book of the Revelations is represented as saying, "I counsel thee to buy of me fine gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich."—iii. 18. Gold, then, being the symbol of heavenly love, which makes the soul rich, was with divine appropriateness commanded to form the ark within, to intimate that love is the inmost soul of all religion. No goodness is real goodness that has not love within it. Prayer is a mockery without love. Eloquence and knowledge are mere tinkling cymbals without love. Faith without love is a dead, hard, cold skeleton. Alms-giving without love is bribery and self-seeking, under the form of liberality. In short, love is the very marrow and pith of every heavenly virtue, and he who lacks that, has really no religion as he ought to have it. Gold is rich in beauty and in value, so is love. Gold is easily malleable, bends readily, and adapts itself to the curves and forms of the bodies to which it applies itself, so does love. Acids will not act upon pure gold, and when our love is thoroughly refined, acid and unreasonable tempers will seek to act upon it in vain.

Hence, then, it was that gold formed the interior of the Ark. But gold formed its outside also, because love in sentiment is a fleeting and perishable thing unless it is accompanied also by love in act. He who truly loves God will work for God. Love is fixed and perfected in work, and he who never gives his love a body, in loving acts, will find that in religion, as well as in other spheres of life, a man may build castles in the air. The golden soul must have a golden life. To teach this, there was gold overlaying the inside of the Ark, and gold without.

There was a golden border of a crown pattern, surrounding the cover of the ark. This is the import of the crown of gold being round about it.

In very deed, if we could see it, everything has its border. Each atom has its magnetism; each flower its fragrance; each

man his influence. And where high Christian love has made its home in the heart, there is an aura of goodness, purity, meekness, and wisdom surrounding it, felt, if not seen. This is the golden border round the Ark. It is a lamb-like atmosphere, which goes where the Christian goes and is ever suggestive of heaven.

The golden circles placed round the heads of the saints by the old painters, no doubt was intended to picture this sphere of love round the celestial Christian ; and could our spirit's sight be opened, we might possibly discern around those beloved ones who glowingly love the Lord, a golden atmosphere just as St. John beheld the angel with the rainbow round his head, (Rev. x. 1) and this would be the extension of the border round their ark : "a crown of righteousness and glory about them which fadeth not away."—2 Peter v. 4.

To the Ark there were rings and staves ; the staves of shittim wood, and the rings of gold. The staves were the means of moving the Ark about, and represent the power of applying interior religion to all the purposes of life ; the rings represent minor affections.

The Ark was the director of the whole progression of Israel. When they were to move, the Ark went before ; when they were to stay, the Ark rested. So should it be with us. Where religion cannot lead us, there we should never go : where it directs the way, there we should fearlessly follow.

There is no department of life which would not be blessed by a true and loving—a golden religion ; there is no undertaking that is not sure to become a snare if true religious motive for it be wanting. Even our pleasures, if innocent and moderate, the relaxation of the bow that it may be more firmly strung again, though but a playful leisure, are holy too. "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you," said our Lord, "and that your joy may be full."—John xv. 11.

Let us never forget to take the ark about with us. And whether we are in work, or rest, or play, whether in the intercourse of friendship, the serious concerns of political life, or the wide-spread engagements of commerce, still let us have the golden Ark of God with us, and all will be well.

It has been suggested, by those who hesitate about divine revelation, that the Egyptians used an ark in their sacred and symbolical worship, long before the Israelites went to Egypt, and that this, and many other portions of the ceremonials of the Jews were simply borrowed from the Egyptians.

It is true that the ancient Egyptians used an ark, true that many of their sacred observances were very similar to what was afterwards enjoined upon the Jews. True, also, that their religion in its earlier and more glorious days, was the worship of one God, the Sun of Heaven, and there is much reason to believe under the name of Jehovah or its equivalent in the Egyptian language. But what does that prove? It proves this, which, in fact, the ancient remains of all the great nations prove; and that is taught by the Word of God. That there had been a great church spreading over the then known earth having the same great truths which have always been the truths of Revelation. These great truths respecting the One God of Love, the Sun of Heaven, respecting His kingdom and the regeneration of man, they not only delighted to meditate upon, but to paint them in symbols, to express them in their temples and their statues, and hence, in India, in China, in Egypt, in Canaan, throughout Asia, and in Europe even, there are hoary remnants of these eternal truths presented in stones, in mythologies, in hieroglyphics, and the graceful fables of Greece, all beautiful and weighty when spiritually understood. Thus it was that the ark was among the Egyptians, originally meaning the very same thing as we have shewn it to mean among the Israelites. But among the Egyptians at the time when Israel left, the truth had been perverted and degraded, the symbols had lost their meaning and been turned to idolatry. The Lord, by Moses, revealed the truth afresh, accurately arranged the sacrifices, and by divine wisdom anew unfolded that law of the Lord which converts the soul, purifies the heart, and leads the mind and life to that obedience to Him which constitutes a man; not an Israelite outwardly, but one inwardly, and makes the servant of the Lord an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

There were three things placed in the Ark. First, the two tables of the commandments; second, the pot of manna; and third, Aaron's rod that budded.

These three things in the Ark, represented the three things which are ever contained in the celestial heart and the celestial heaven, the Holy of holies on the small scale and on the great. First, above all and within all, are the two tables, the laws of love to God and charity to man. Next, the pot of manna, the recollection of mercies past, ever saying in the heart, Salvation has been of the Lord; hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Thirdly, Aaron's rod that budded, that is the spirit of obedience to the Lord's government; the determination to trust, in all the future progress in the regenerate life, on Him alone.

The two tables in the ark, represented the supreme government, in the affections, of the divine law ; and this must ever exist to direct the whole mind in purity and order. Of the truly good man it is said, "The law of his God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide."—Ps. xxxvii. 31. It will ever be his loving confession, as it is that of the angels, "Thy word have I hid within my heart, that I might not sin against thee."—Ps. cxix. 11. This law of heavenly love in the heart is not a constraint, it is what St. James calls "The perfect law of liberty."—i. 25. Outward law exercises constraint, but inward law implanted in the very centre of the affections gives perfect freedom. It disposes the whole being into harmony with the Lord, who is order itself, with heaven and all its spheres of order and beauty, and with the world around as the outbirth of the world within. The desires, hopes, wishes, determinations, thoughts, sentiments, and works of one whose delighted affections enclose the Word, like the golden Ark around the tables of law, are, in order, and the universe pours its joys around and upon him. His soul, like a multiform Eolian harp, gathers music from all the auras of heaven. Such a one is blessed in his inmost motives, blessed in his conceptions and meditations, and he is blessed in his deeds. His whole inner state is golden, and he takes it everywhere.

The pot of manna also placed in the Ark, (Ex. xvi. 33 ; Heb. ix. 4), has also its counterpart in the Christian's inmost heart. He never forgets the way the Lord has brought him, and the wondrous mercies which have attended him in days gone by. By the grace of God, he says, I am what I am. He has preserved me so many times that I will never for a moment cease to trust Him. There is written on the highest mountain of my inmost love, "The Lord will provide." I have a pot of manna laid up before the Lord for all generations.

And the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, indicative of the government of love and wisdom in the future, for Levi in Hebrew means conjunction, while its budding, having blossoms, and bearing the fruits of the almond tree, the earliest of the fruit-bearing trees of Canaan, implies that promptitude of obedience which comes from perfect love.

All these things are contained in the inmost of a true Christian. The little heaven within him ever governed by the divine will, ever grateful for divine mercies, ever running with delight to bow to the sceptre of divine government, is a living Ark in which the Lord dwells, and fulfils His gracious promise, "There I will meet thee, and I will commune with thee."

SERMON XXVIII.

THE MERCY SEAT.

“And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold : two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end : even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof. And the cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another ; towards the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark ; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”—Exodus xxv. 17—22.

The mercy seat, what a beautiful name ! Who does not feel his need of mercy ! The highest angels know best the unutterable greatness, goodness, and purity of the Lord, and how much He “humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven.”—Ps. cxiii. 6. Before him no finite being is pure. The heavens are not clean in his sight. He only is absolutely holy.—Rev. xv. 4. Whosoever, therefore, is saved, from the sublimest seraph to the poorest sinner, is so, because “the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works” (Ps. cxiv. 9) ; and the whole redeemed universe will ever respond to the gracious words, “O give thanks to the God of heaven, for his mercy endureth for ever.”—Ps. cxxxvi. 26. There will never be any merit in any creature to purchase or to deserve salvation. Every redeeming act is of mercy ; all our regeneration is of mercy ; the gift of the Holy Word is of mercy ; the grace of the Holy Spirit is of mercy. We are spared of mercy ; we are blest of mercy ; we are comforted of mercy ; we are purified of mercy ; and we shall be admitted to heaven at last of the purest mercy.

This grand and consolatory truth became greatly obscured by those, who, unhappily, had been taught to think the Scriptures taught that the Divine Being was in three divine persons. They attributed

what they called strict and inflexible justice to the first person. He, said they, cannot pardon without the fullest penalty of sin being paid. Except some one pays the infinite punishment incurred by sin against infinite purity, no mortal can escape everlasting perdition. The second person is represented as All-Merciful, and not only has no demand for punishment to make, but also is willing to suffer in man's stead, and thus pay in full the demands of the first. Thus, not only is the mercy of the first divine person obscured by such a system for a time, but if it were true, it would be blotted out of our idea of the divine perfections for ever. For certainly he who takes payment in full can never be said to be shewing mercy. As, according to this scheme, the first person in the Deity is paid in full for every ransomed sinner, and spares no mortal for whom He was not paid, it is difficult to see how any one with such a view can really have a clear conception of the divine mercy of the first person at all.

But this difficulty does not exist in the scriptural character of the Lord. He is one Divine Person. His nature is LOVE: His mercy is infinite. "I even I, am he," the Lord says, "that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins."—Isa. xliii. 25. He proclaimed Himself before Moses "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."—Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. There was, then, a Mercy Seat under the old dispensation. There was not such an inexorable Deity as some have painted. There is a Mercy Seat now for the whole world in the Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and there is a Mercy Seat in each individual soul, by which each one can approach his Saviour, and by which, and from which his Saviour will commune with him.

We might dwell upon each of these three aspects of the divine mercy suggested by the divinely appointed representation of it in the Mercy Seat; but we select the chief one as presented in the Humanity of our Lord, because a clear conception of that will enable us to understand its other applications, and because also that grand medium of our salvation is actually the Mercy Seat of the universe. God in His humanity, is "Emmanuel, God with us." "God was in Christ," (God is in Christ) "reconciling the world unto himself."—2 Cor. v. 19.

The Mercy Seat was of gold, because, as we have often shewn,

that metal symbolizes heavenly love, here, the divine love in the Lord's Humanity. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself."—John v. 26. The divine love in the unrevealed Deity is above man's thought. "Ye have neither heard the voice of the Father at any time, nor seen his shape."—John v. 37. But in the Divine Human Saviour a door of access was given. In Him, God became man, and man could approach to God. What immeasurable tenderness was revealed in the Saviour's call! "Whosoever will come unto me I will in no wise cast out." The tenderness of the divine love in the Humanity of the Lord, the Father in the Son, was manifested in so many ways, and on so many occasions, that none could mistake it. The golden Mercy Seat was there. "Come unto me," He said, "all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. xi. 28. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." Luke xii. 4. "I am the door: by me if any man shall enter in he shall be saved, and he shall go in and out and find pasture." John x. 9. The Mercy Seat was there for every soul that had lost his way. "The Son of Man had come to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke xix. 10.

The Saviour's love is, then, the Mercy Seat, and so perfectly has it been manifested in His life, His death, and His resurrection, that no one who humbly sought ever failed to find acceptance there. He gave His life for His sheep. He tasted death for every man. And when through death He conquered him that had the power of death even the devil. (Heb. ii. 24) (all hell viewed as one), then He rose in His glorified manhood, and He gives the Holy Spirit to all who ask Him.

The mercy displayed in this Mercy Seat is infinite. None who truly seek it, from the youthful to the hoary, ever go empty away. There the tender mercy of our God, the day spring from on high, hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace. Words altogether fail to convey the true idea of the infinitude of the divine mercy. Those hard-souled men who have attributed their own flintiness to the Divine Being, and described God in Christianity as a Deity remorseless and terrible as the fate of Paganism, might have learned from the healing powers of nature, that mercy, as well as rectitude, are in the Most High, the God of nature.

If there is a wound anywhere how instantly the powers of renovation gather round to heal it. With how gentle a hand

time touches a great sorrow, until the bitter smart has disappeared, and the stricken heart has sadly and humbly learned to smile again. The shock of battle has covered a bloody field with mangled remains; the dead and the dying make a spectacle of overwhelming ghastliness on the morning after the dread turmoil is over. But let a year pass by, and the gentle winds, and the friendly rains, and the green grass will all conspire to cover the sad scene with new life, and so remove the wreck that the traveller will realize with difficulty the awful scene where thousands of human beings imitated infernal fiendishness, and struggled with each other, hacked each other, groaned and died. Nature is very pitiful, or rather God in nature.

But all these indications of divine tenderness and mercy in nature, are faint in the impressions they make on the mind, especially since nature is an arena upon which all spiritual powers display themselves. It is the outer covering of the inner world of spiritual forces, and these reveal not only airs from heaven, but blasts from hell. The storm, the tornado, the earthquake, the volcano, the blight, the pestilence, express terrible forces which man cannot but dread, and when he does not know that there is an infernal inner world from which these plagues come, he attributes them all to God, and he is sorely puzzled.

But the divine tenderness in our Saviour the Lord Jesus is constant and universal. His whole life was the life of love. His works were mercy embodied. It was love reaching down to establish a new centre of activity, in which, He eventually would conquer wrath, hate, selfishness, passion, lust, and every curse, and over a redeemed, regenerated, well-ordered, wise, and happy world, the Lamb, embodied divine love in glorious human form, should reign supreme. From this Seat of Mercy love is extended to all. It reigns in the heavens, on earth, and over hell. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

Mercy exists in the Saviour for all. When we read the declaration of Paul that he would willingly be accursed himself if thereby his brethren according to the flesh could be saved, and wonder at the extent of Christian love the Holy Spirit of his Master had developed in him, and, think, if on earth such love can exist, what would be the glow of seraphic love in the angels of the highest heaven, we cannot doubt that they would change places with fiends if thereby the tenants of the abode of misery could be blest. If such love as this exists in the angels, the streams, what must it be in the Fountain? Divine love, we are persuaded, would give itself altogether

to unutterable torment, or to annihilation, if thereby the wicked could be transformed, be blessed, and made happy. But it is impossible. None can be happy unless they are good ; none can be good unless they are free ; and none can be free unless protected in that freedom by Omnipotence. Hence, Divine Love acts by divine order, and says to every soul, "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."—Deut. iv. 16. The owl would not be happy in the light ; the fish would not be happy in the air ; the tiger would not be happy upon grapes ; nor would the owl and tiger souls of the lower world be joyful in the pure and loving splendours of Paradise.

It is to this subject the Divine Word invites us, in describing the cherubim at the two ends of the Mercy Seat. The cherubim were guards, the word cherub means to guard. The first mention of cherubim in the Scriptures is accompanied by the declaration that they were "to keep the way of the tree of life," against man in his fallen and not yet repentant condition.—Gen. iii. 24.

The two cherubs at the Mercy Seat, made of the same gold, and actually of one piece with it, represent the two grand loves from which all goodness proceeds : LOVE to God and LOVE to Man. Without these none can be happy, or can go to heaven. Hence, their symbols were as cherubs to guard the way of the Mercy Seat. There is mercy in forbidding the wicked to enter heaven, as well as in admitting the good. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?"—Rom. ii. 4.

The evil cannot be led directly to happiness, but they can be led to repentance ; and then step by step in the regenerate life, until a heavenly nature is formed within them, and then they can enter heaven and be happy.

It is then mercy that guards the Mercy Seat. The cherubs are made of the same piece of gold, and always "toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the cherubim be."—Exodus xxv. 22.

'Tis Mercy bids us all forsake,
Whate'er that all implies ;
And Mercy's counsel we shall take,
If we are truly wise.

How much it would contribute to human happiness, did we constantly bear in mind, that, Infinite Love is the soul of

Providence, and is as certainly regarding our eternal interests in what it denies, as in what it grants. We are too often like children, yearning for the gratification of our present desires, and praying for self-indulgences, the granting of which would be our greatest curse. Far wiser was the ancient philosopher who, when seeing the glittering abundance of the bazaar at Athens, quietly observed,—How many things there are here that I don't want. Resistance to evil things, and moderation in good, are the true elements of Christian conduct ; and when temperate wants are supplied, the really good man will gratefully exclaim,

And, if it please Thee, heavenly guide,
 May never worse be sent ;
 But whether granted or denied,
 Lord bless us with content.

The cherubim that forbid approach have their faces towards the Mercy Seat, depend upon that. And if you cannot yet come near to your Saviour and to heaven, it is that you have something to discover and renounce. Go and question yourself, and do the work of repentance, and come again, and you will hear the divine voice of the Merciful One saying, "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.

The cherubs were winged, and they were to stretch forth their wings on high.

We have already intimated that the two cherubs represented the two great principles which form the very life of all religion. In the prophecy of Zechariah they are described as the two olive trees which stand before the Lord of the whole earth (iv. 14) ; and in the book of Revelation, the two witnesses (xi. 4) represent the same two affections which alone give energy and character to the religious state in the soul of their possessor. No man can truly love God who does not love his brother also. No man can genuinely love his brother who has no true foundation for that affection in the love of God. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—Matt. xxii. 40. They form the right hand and the left hand in the Lord's kingdom. Both principles must exist in every candidate for heaven. They in whom love to the Lord predominates being accepted on the right hand, and they in whom love to the neighbour predominates being received on the left hand in the heavenly world. But none being received from mercy alone

without this preparation in their own souls.—Matt. xx. 23. Real spiritual love, however, always seeks truths by which to act, and by which to rise. These truths are represented by the wings of the cherubim over the Mercy Seat, and stretching on high. Truths raise the soul upward, as wings do birds. Truths defend and preserve good, as wings defend the body of the bird; and truths protect the interests dear to good, as wings protect the brood which the bird desires to cherish. The wings of the Almighty are His divine truths by which He protects His children. Hence we read, "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.

The Christian is said to mount up with wings, because by clear views of divine truths his soul soars in meditation to heaven. "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; they shall walk and not faint."—Isa. xl. 31. Angels are sometimes represented as winged men, by symbol to tell us the same great fact, that their minds have elevated and elevating truths on which they soar upwards in divine things.

The two cherubs, then, had wings stretching on high; to teach us that genuine love to the Lord clothes itself with genuine truth. It desires to know the Lord; it wishes to embrace Him, as it were, and to abide in Him. It is not indifferent whether there is one God or many. It seeks and yearns if haply it may find Him. And having found Him in the Lord Jesus Christ "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9), it casts its crown before Him, and rejoices with exceeding great joy. Love to the neighbour also has wings. It is not a blind purpose, but an intelligent regard for our neighbour's real good. It is charity combined with principle. It desires to promote our neighbour's well-being, and above all his eternal well-being. It does not forget his body, but it seeks to minister to his higher nature. Most of all it rejoices when it sees him growing in wisdom and intelligence; preparing to become a companion-angel in the realms of peace. The heavenly cherubim have always wings, and they always stretch upward.

In our Divine Lord's own person these sublime principles have their origin, and heaven is opened or closed as those who wish to enter are in harmony with these two winged cherubs or not. "He opens and no man shuts; he shuts and no man opens."—Rev. iii. 7.

Before Aaron could enter into the Holy of holies, and present himself before the Mercy Seat, he was commanded to wash, and robe himself suitably, offering incense by fire, and sprinkling the blood of the goat chosen by the Lord for sacrifice, seven times, to hallow and and to reconcile the holy place.—Lev. xvi. 4—19.

The Saviour purified His manhood, and prepared it for full union with His eternal divine love, the Father. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished."—Luke xii. 50. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may be sanctified by the truth."—John xvii. 19. Thus He embodied in Himself the eternal Mercy Seat. In Him is the Father. He and the Father are one. Whosoever sees Him sees the Father. He is the First and the Last, the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and the Morning Star.

Go at his command and wash. This is the first duty. Repent and renounce what God and conscience teach you to be evil in life. Whatever offence against the Lord's commandments you perceive in your conduct must be washed away, or it is vain to approach the Mercy Seat. The Lord saves a man *from* his sins, not *in* his sins. Renounce evil so far as you know it, and pray to the Lord for zeal to live a good life; then draw near to the Great Saviour and beseech Him to form within you His blessed kingdom. Then will you find a welcome from Him. He will give you to eat of the hidden man, and impart to you a white stone. You will feel a witness within, of wisdom, joy, and peace unspeakable, which will diffuse through the soul a present heaven, and because heaven has come to you, an undoubting confidence will fill you that you will enter it.

Approach, O my soul, to this Merciful Saviour; thou wilt not be cast out. But first wash thyself by repentance; "wash thine heart from wickedness, and thou shalt be saved."—Jer. iv. 14. Clothe thyself with the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints. Let the wisdom of a true faith quicken and purify thee even to fulness, like the blood of the goat sprinkled seven times, and then go in and commune with thy Saviour God. The Mercy Seat will glow with a Divine Light, and thou shalt have answers of peace. The Lord will make His abode with thee and bless thee; He will appear on the little golden Mercy Seat within thee; the cherubs will not repel, but invite thee, and never leave thee more.

SERMON XXIX.

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD.

“Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. And thou shalt make unto it a border of a hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.”—Exodus xxv. 23—30.

Religion is usually regarded as a balm for sorrow, a defence against sin, and a comfort in death. It is all these, and more than these—it is a supply of daily bread. Hence there was placed in the sanctuary the Table of Shewbread. This fact is often overlooked to our serious detriment. We need daily bread for the soul, as we need daily bread for the body, and we cannot forego without loss of strength, either the one or the other. “Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord doth man live.”—Deut. viii. 3.

The ordinary condition of life should undoubtedly be cheerful usefulness, and enjoyment. We have so many sources of blessing, such wondrous faculties, and such wondrous supplies for them that we might fairly be expected to walk through life rejoicingly, with only now and then a trouble or a struggle, as is the case with the body of one whose ordinary condition is good health. It is not so. The life of religious people generally is by no means of that hearty kindness, that loving goodness, that cheerful contentedness and ready delight in duty, which surround a man with an atmosphere of happiness, and flow from interior ease. On the contrary, there is too much shrinking from duty, too much of the spirit of complaint, too much of the spirit of the bewailing lackadaisical miserable-sinner religion in the world to suit those who worship a God of Love, and feel themselves in a

glorious world, which He had made, in which to train them for a still more glorious one,—for heaven. Our duties, ought to be our delight; our steps in life, those of vigorous travellers who are each day certainly nearing home; our service, that of subjects who love their King, feel sure of His protection, are charmed with the employment He affords them; and while they bless Him for His goodness now, look forward with confident hope and heartfelt joy at the prospect before them. Wherever this is not the abiding temper of the Christian, it indicates a weak and unhealthy state. On one occasion, when the disciples of our Lord took a voyage across the sea of Galilee, it is significantly said of them they had forgotten to take bread.—Matt. xvi. 5. And, this is assuredly a foretoken of what has often happened in Christian experience since. Too often the disciples in all ages have forgotten to take that inward food of heavenly goodness which satisfies the hungry soul and makes it strong. They are fretful, uneasy, and weak. They mourn and complain, and weary all about them. Why is it? They have forgotten to take bread. To guard us against this neglect, and to teach us that whatever we know, or whatever we think of heavenly truth, we must not neglect the bread of heavenly goodness; there was a Table in the sanctuary, on which, every Sabbath, were placed twelve loaves of bread, sprinkled with frankincense.—Lev. xxiv. 5—9. These twelve loaves were to supply the priests with food; but they also represent that true and living bread which comes down from heaven and of which it is written, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”—Matt. v. 6.

That heavenly bread is heavenly goodness, we are abundantly taught in the Word. “He satisfieth the longing (thirsty) soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness,” (Ps. cvii. 9,) gives the correspondence in the very term itself—goodness. In like manner it is written in Isaiah, “Wherefore do ye spend 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 with fatness.”—lv. 2. Divine goodness in the Lord accommodated to human reception is called “The bread of God, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”—John vi. 33. And when the disciples exclaimed, Lord evermore give us this bread, the Lord rejoined, “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”—John vi. 35. “I am the living bread which came

down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever."—John vi. 51.

The twelve loaves represented a full supply of heavenly goodness for every state, for every individual, and for the whole Church. There were twelve tribes of Israel, and twelve loaves of shewbread. The number twelve is always used when a full and complete state of things in the Church is described. There were twelve apostles chosen; there are twelve foundations to the New Jerusalem, and twelve gates of entrance. To teach then the divine bounty in celestial things, the Table of Shewbread was supplied with these twelve loaves, the symbols of abundance of heavenly goodness.

The Divine Creator has supplied us, in our creation, with appetites for heavenly things, corresponding with hunger and thirst. His intention manifestly is, that we should yearn after food for the soul as earnestly as we do for food to supply the body and that the supply should be as regular for one as for the other.

There being food prepared for the soul, and appetites desiring such holy nourishment, with all collateral circumstances implying these, illustrate the complete correspondence of the worlds of matter and of mind.

The affections yearn for their objects, and for loveable goodness in these objects, as truly as the body yearns for food. Heart-hunger panting for sympathy is a feeling admitted to be universal. How tender a sentiment was awakened in the public mind a few years ago when the dying Judge Talfourd gave his affecting exhortation to all classes of mankind to lay aside coldness and scorn, and give free play to loving sympathy with one another.

The child yearns for the kind word of his father, the smile of his mother. The youth pants for fellow hearts, to beat in harmony with his own, and then for one pure counterpart that shall beat responsive to his. He craves for talent, for excellence, for success, and for fame. And, when his spiritual nature has opened its germs, he craves to be good, to be better, to have close communion with the Lord. The aspirations of the heart after its eternal good, utter themselves as we find them expressed in the Psalms, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none that I desire on earth beside thee,"—Ps. lxxiii. 25; "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."—Ps. lxxxiv. 2. These hungerings after goodness are never satisfied until they finally rest on the Lord Jesus Christ. In Him they are filled

with peace. He Himself says, "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."—John vi. 35.

In the New Testament the Lord describes the divine gift of heavenly goodness to the soul by a wedding dinner (Matt. xxii. 4) and a supper: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him, and sup with him, and he with me."—Rev. iii. 20. It is called eating "of the hidden manna."—Rev. ii. 17; all terms which imply the surpassing worth of the divine things imparted. Goodness filled with sweetness and with indescribable peace, forms a treasure above all price, a meat which endures to everlasting life.

The loaves on the Table of the Shewbread were made each of two tenth-deals or omers of flour, equal to three quarts of flour in each, a tolerably substantial supply. There were in the various offerings of the Israelitish worship three forms of bread used: the loaves as here on the Table of Shewbread, the cake of oiled bread, and the wafer of unleavened bread (Ex. xxix. 23); because these three represent the relative proportions of heavenly food which can be received by the three grand classes of Christians:—the men of obedience, the men of truth, and the men of love. The good of obedience received by those who obey the precepts of the Lord in the letter only, is the good represented by the wafer; pure and sound, but not deep. The good of truth is like the cake in comparison, and is received by those who have advanced out of the lowest class into the second; who delight to understand the truth as well as to do what they are commanded; who follow the truth, and by the truth are made free. The men of love, they who have passed on through the states of the two former, and live in love, find the loaves, twelve loaves, for them on the golden table, good of the deepest, fullest kind, and in the greatest abundance. The meat of the Lord's table is to them never wanting, and always rich and delightful. They receive that perfect love in which there is no fear. They have meat to eat, of which the world knows nothing.

The Table was made, like the ark, of the sacred cedar of Shittim, and was covered with gold. The wood of this fragrant cedar, which was the only wood used in the tabernacle, and subsequently in the temple, was the symbol, as we have recently shewn, of the righteousness derived from the Divine Humanity of the Lord Jesus. He is called a divine cedar, because of the protecting shadow of His Divine Human virtues under which we can rest. His nature imparted to us, enables Him to tabernacle

in us, and to build us into living temples in which His Holy Spirit can dwell. This imparted righteousness of our Lord, in whom alone all merit dwells, then, is the shittim wood. The gold with which it was covered represents the highest love to Him, which embraces and encircles the good we receive from Him. This gold of highest holiest love, we have when we have been faithful in temptation and come out purified by the trial. "I counsel thee," said the Lord, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich,"—Rev. iii. 18. We have become rich indeed, when having again and again become more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

The Table of fragrant cedar then covered with gold, on which were every Sabbath placed the twelve loaves, represented this celestial state of the soul, in which the Lord supplies goodness, peace, and every blessing.

The Table was two cubits in length, to intimate the conjunction of love to God and love to man. The breadth was one cubit, to intimate the truth of this state all the expression of love. Its height was one and a half cubits, to denote its ever rising holiness. The crown border is the loving wisdom which forms a sphere round such a celestial state.

The staves and the rings represent, as in the case of the ark, the power of adapting the deepest and holiest things of religion to daily life. The religion that does not go wherever we go to keep us unspotted in the world, has not yet acquired its divine power in us. The true Christian has his Table of Shewbread always with him. His supply of bread never fails. The staves, like arms, are always ready to bear the treasure of food onwards, and they are connected with the Table itself by golden rings, significative of a feeling of everlasting love in all we do. The rings connected on the one side with the Table and on the other with the staves, exhibit the two sides of everything we do. We work on earth, but we work for heaven. However low the use we may be engaged in performing, if done from love to the Lord, it has a celestial virtue in it linked with the eternal sanctuary and prepares us for heaven.

There were four kinds of golden vessels on the Table besides the loaves themselves, and to these we would call attention, for they, too, had their lessons to yield to all generations.

They are called dishes and spoons, covers and bowls.—v. 29.

The first two kinds were for the frankincense which was sprinkled upon the bread (Lev. xxiv. 7); the second two kinds were for the wine of the pour-offering, called usually drink-

offering, which was not, however, drunk, but poured upon the animal offered up by fire.—Num. xv. 5. The latter two kinds would be better rendered bowls and cups, not as the text calls them, covers and bowls.

The two uses to be accomplished by these vessels are both most important in their spiritual signification. The incense sprinkled upon the bread representing the grateful aspirations of the heart attributing all good to the Lord, while the wine taken from within the holy place and poured over the burnt offering at the door, would represent the union of inward truth with outward worship.

Both these acts are essential to the real devotion of the soul to the Lord. Whatever good we find in our hearts to do, we should adoringly acknowledge the Lord alone to be its Author. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." The angels of heaven are ever in their hearts, saying, "Holy, holy, holy." On all their good there is the blessed frankincense of interior adoration, ascription, and praise. "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy."

The wine which was poured out on the burnt offering, and which was taken from the Table of Shewbread and poured from the golden cup, being taken from the golden bowl, is a beautiful emblem of the inner spirit and life of religion blessing that outward worship which is in accord with itself. The mind well-instructed from the Word, and warmed by a regenerate heart, has always a cup running over with the new wine of the kingdom, which it is ready to pour over worship in prayer, and worship in work.

All the vessels are of gold. The soul has upon its inner table choice portions of the Word, like golden vessels, selected and arranged so that the frankincense may go upward, and the wine go outward, and man be taught, and God be praised.

The name of the Table is worthy of notice. It is called the Table of Shewbread, or in the Hebrew, the "bread of faces," because it is the manifestation of the divine goodness. It shews the infinite bounty of the Lord: His pity, His compassion, His loving-kindness. His faces, or aspects, are mercy, tenderness, love, and the shining forth of these, in wisdom, holiness, purity. The bread of goodness provided by the Lord is the result of all these divine graces, and hence, is called "the bread of faces." It contains sustenance for time and for eternity. It is the bread of life.

And now, may we not ask, Christian traveller, are you provided with this store of the bread of heaven? Are you supplied, or are you attempting to make your journey of life with hardly any bread? If the latter, no wonder you are cast down, weak, and discouraged, you are not half fed. "Come, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Remember how careful the divine mercy was in the days of Joseph, to lay up abundant stores of corn in Egypt, and thus provide against the years of famine. Have you been thus provided for? Have father and mother and friends, directed by the Lord, forestalled your wants, and provided that as your day is, so shall your supply be? Never forget to take bread. You have much work to do, and many hard battles to fight, but eat heartily of your Lord's bread, and strength will be given you, and all will be well.

Look well to yourself. Many a great general has declared that his victories have been won quite as much with good food as with strong arms. Do you take your food every day? Do you ask the Lord's blessing and read His Word daily? The direction for the Table of Shewbread was, that it should have a fresh and full supply every Sabbath. Do you attend well to the Christian Sabbath, and replenish the Table fully then? Is the language of your gratitude, "When I found thy words I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart?" If so, you will be ready for Christian work, and will do it with Christian ease.

There is one feast above all others, prepared of divine mercy with especial regard to our necessities, we mean the Holy Supper. Do you diligently and faithfully seek that?

The Lord honours this feast with the title of His flesh and His blood. His flesh is meat indeed, His blood is drink indeed. "Whoso eats His flesh and drinks His blood hath eternal life." What a wonderful effect! Eternal life! Eternal love! Love is life.

Life, my beloved, is what we need, to live in goodness filled with sweetness and with peace. "Whoso eateth me," the Lord says, "shall live by me." Do we not wish to live? How can we live unless we receive Him. "With desire," He once said to His disciples "have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer." To abide in love, to work in love, to be grateful and full of praise in love. This is to be in life. Heaven is the land of the living. There is the Fountain of life; there the trees of life, the river of life. The Lord is life itself, and all live to Him.

Once more, do not forget there is defiled bread. The soul that has been forgetful of the bread of heaven is seduced to take polluted food. We can no more do absolutely without spiritual food, than we can without natural food.

Some people live on works of the imagination. These, when illustrative of true principles of life, and calculated to diffuse sympathy and kindness have a noble mission. When used to lighten our own grave duties in the world in the intervals of goodly work, the result of our own sense of duty, they are things to cheer, to strengthen, and to bless. But woe to those who live wholly on the imagination. It is spiritual dram-drinking; it is living on chaff; what is the chaff to the wheat? The greedy devourer of novel after novel, who is yet yearning after a sense of solid satisfaction, is seeking it where it cannot be found. These things at the best are the condiments of life, not the solid food. If your duties in life lie in its lower walks, do them faithfully, justly, from a spirit of religion. If you have no necessity to labour, yet look around for useful action. Life was not made for dreaming. What will your soul be in the eternal world if you have dozed its powers away in helpless inactivity. Remember who said, "Thou sayest thou art rich and hast need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked."—Rev. iii. 17.

Take relaxation, but do not neglect the ministries of life. "Work while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work."—John ix. 4. An early life spent here in brilliant nothings, promises later years of wearisomeness, repinings, heart-achings, and regrets. The life of a moth spends itself in producing a worm. Vain dreamer! "Let your light so shine before men, that they can see your good works." Die not a sloth, to rise a fiend.

Once more, let us turn to the food provided by our Lord in the Holy Place. It is good, like the delights of angels, the bread of heaven. It is served on a golden table, beneath the smile of the Most High. Angels minister while you eat. The food itself gives life, eternal life and happiness. You are filled with joy unspeakable, and this meat endures to everlasting life. The Divine King of the feast Himself invites you. Hear His gracious voice, and obey, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live."—Isa. lv. 2, 3.

SERMON XXX.

THE SACRED CANDLESTICK.

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all of it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold shall ye make it, with all these vessels. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount."—Exodus xxv. 31—40.

One of the grand distinctions between a true religion and a false one is, that the true seeks light, and diffuses it, the other shrouds itself in mystery, and cries stand still: the one opens the mind, the other closes it.

The characteristic of opening the mind, and making it free by enlightening it, which is the virtue of true religion, is presented to us both in the world and in the Word by many symbols. The world rejoices in the light, trees grow in light, flowers derive their varied hues and loveliness from the light, and disclose them to the light. The sun, moon, stars, are things of light, and things of beauty.

So with Israel in Egypt, while their oppressors were in thick darkness, they had light in their dwellings. During the forty years of the sojourn in the wilderness the pillar of fire by night gave light to the camp.

The Lord Himself is light.—Ps. xxvii. 1. His Word is light.—Ps. cxix. 105. "Light is sown for the righteous."—Ps. xcvi. 11. "The path of the just is as the shining light."—Prov. iv. 18. The disciples of the Lord are to walk in the light.—John viii. 12; believe in the light.—John xii. 36. The light of the wicked will be put out, and they shall never see light.—

Ps. xlix. 19. But to the good, "the Lord shall be an everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended."—Isa. lx. 20. When true religion comes, it is light opposed to blindness. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee."—Isa. lx. 1.

It is this same lesson, with the beautiful and important details connected with it, that is given in the description of the Golden Candlestick, or more strictly speaking, the lampholder of the Jewish sanctuary.

This Candlestick was the representation of the Church, as to its office of enlightening the world; and in relation to an individual, it represents the intellect or understanding of man in its capacity of holding up the truth and enlightening the mind. The Church has the duty of enlightening the great world, the intellect that of enlightening the little world of each soul.

To illustrate and enforce the Church's character as a diffuser of light from its Lord, who is the centre of light, the Sun of righteousness, when John was in vision, he saw a representation of "one like unto the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks;" and the seven candlesticks are declared to be the seven churches.—Rev. i. 20.

The appropriateness of the symbol flashes upon the mind when it is mentioned. The world is like a dark valley until the light of life is thrown over it, by the formation of a church, which becomes a city of light, a city on a hill. The Church is not self-luminous, nor self-created. It is a lamp to hold the light. The Lord is the light itself. He is in the midst of the candlesticks. They derive their light from Him. His countenance is like the sun shining in its strength.—Rev. i. 16. "That is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John i. 9.

The church that does not hail the light, hold up the light, pray evermore for an increase of light, has lost the spirit of its Master, the very warrant for its existence; it has become a dead thing. Its very office, and reason for being, were that it might exhort every man to become good, and to become wise; to cry incessantly, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—Eph. v. 14. When it ceases to do this, it becomes an old lamp; it has no value; it impedes rather than aids mankind. The light that is in it is darkness, and it goes about to rail at the light, and pretend that mystery is better. "When the light that is in thee is darkness, how great is that darkness."—Matt. vi. 22.

We have said the intellect to one mind, is like the Church to the world. The Candlestick, or lampholder, which represents the one, represents also the other. Hence we read in the Scriptures declarations like these: "Thou wilt light my lamp, the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."—Ps. xviii. 28; "I have ordained a lamp for my anointed."—Ps. cxxxii. 17; "Whoso curseth his father, his lamp shall be put out."—Prov. xx. 20; "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord."—Prov. xx. 27. And in the Gospel our Lord describes His Church as consisting of ten virgins who take their lamps, but only the wise take the oil of love sufficient to prevent the light from going out.—Matt. xxv.

Let us consider, then, the golden lampholder in our text as the divinely appointed type of a truly heavenly intellect, and we shall find in all its parts lessons of wisdom, which will amply disclose to us the reason for the closing command of our text, "And look that thou make them after their pattern which was shewed thee in the mount."

Firstly, then, let us notice that the Candlestick was to be made of pure gold, of beaten work.

Secondly. There were to be six branches and a central pillar having various ornaments and connections among themselves; knobs and flowers, and bowls made like almonds.

Thirdly. There were snuffers and snuff-dishes, made out of the same gold as the Candlestick itself, the gold of the whole being one talent.

The first particular, that the Candlestick was to be formed of gold, suggests, not only that we should serve the Lord with what is most valuable and best, which is undoubtedly a truth not to be forgotten, but teaches us that a true heavenly understanding comes from true heavenly love. Gold is the symbol, amongst metals, of such love. "For brass I will bring gold," saith the Lord.—Isa. lx. 17. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire."—Rev. iii. 18.

The state of the heart far more affects the state of the thought than many suppose. It is very common to assume that the intellect is guided by evidence only. Give a man facts and reasons and you will compel him to believe. Nothing evinces a more shallow observation of mankind, or a less acquaintance with divine teaching. "He that loveth God knoweth God," said one apostle. "With the heart a man believeth unto righteousness," said another. None are so blind as they who will not see, adds the old proverb. The poet was a much shrewder observer of

human nature than the philosophers who suppose the intellect acts responsive to pure evidence when he writes :—

The heart ay's the part ay
Which makes us right or wrong.

Pure Christian love disposes the intellect to receive the truths which flow from Divine Love. "Charity, or love, believeth all things," says Paul, "hopeth all things, beareth all things." Time was, when heavenly truths flowed out of celestial affections as flames from fires, or instincts from the affections of animals ; but after the fall, and through long ages, the human WILL became so degraded and corrupt that the imaginations of his heart were polluted and abominable, only evil continually.—Gen. vi. 5. Then it became necessary for truth to enter the soul by an outward way, and it is only by the victories of truth over our evils, and the formation of a new heart with new affections, that golden states of love are obtained once more. An inner golden age is once more realized in the soul, when from a loving heart a loving intellect is formed, or in other words, the Golden Candlestick is formed of pure gold, or pure love. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—Matt. v. 8.

Our Lord said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The selfish, the sordid, the corrupt, have no wish, and hence no power to see divine things.

Pure love, within itself, includes
The source of all beatitudes,
And they who act from love ;
Whate'er they do, find pleasure still,
Performing thus their Father's will,
His nameless peace they prove.

The Candlestick was of pure gold, then, to represent that all our light should be embraced by love to the Lord, the gold of heaven. The word beaten would be better rendered solid, and is said to be solid, to indicate its genuine character. True goodness is ever solid. There is nothing either hollow or pretentious about it. It is sincere, thorough, solid.

We are secondly led to consider the progressions of love into intelligence, and into act, in the description given of the six branches of the Candlestick ; of their knops, flowers, and almond-shaped bowls.

Celestial love is an active principle. There is a sentimentality which takes the name sometimes, and simulates some of the appearances of love, but is quite another thing. Mere sentiment is self-absorbed, or evaporates in wishes and dreams. Love works and sends out arms like branches to pour out its blessings

upon others. It seeks light, and it desires to impart light to others.

The six arms and the central stem or shaft, making seven in all, represent love sending out truths and principles on all the subjects and states of the regenerate life. The seven lamps of fire before the throne of God undoubtedly represent the perfect and entire divine wisdom (Rev. iv. 5); and that same divine wisdom, when received by man, would be fitly represented by the seven lights of the divinely arranged Candlestick.

The Word is such a light unto our path, and such a lamp unto our feet. Its very commencement describes the particulars of our whole regenerate life, as creation, through seven days. And what thus forms the commencement of the Word, when amplified and varied, forms the whole Word, for what is the whole Word but light from the Lord upon all the states needed to train us for heaven. In its spirit, it is a divine Candlestick, having seven lamps. These lamps illuminate the whole road that leads to life. They are golden lamps, and clear as crystal. The nations of them who are saved shall walk in the light of them. The great king of the city to which we go, has prepared and arranged them so that earnest travellers shall not err upon the royal highway. There are seven lamps, and they illuminate the whole way, and they are always burning.

Under each two branches there was what is called a knop, and also under each bowl. In the original the word rendered knop is pomegranate. We presume it was a ball, or small sphere, in the shape of a pomegranate. The pomegranate is a fruit usually about the size of an orange, full of red seeds, sweet and pleasant for food.

The pomegranate form at the base of each of the two branches and then again under separate lamps, seems to represent those views of good, those schemes of mercy and love which form the delightful contemplation and purpose of those who have taken up the cross. It is their deep determination to follow their master doing good. They see as many objects of active use as seeds in the pomegranate, and they are sweet to their taste. Their aim afterwards is to realize these in the various stages of their religious progress. Their frames of minds and feelings may vary, but their active life of good is still the same. There was a pomegranate under every lamp. In every state they still are ministers of good; they still aim at blessing others.

There was also a flower under each bowl, to receive it as a cup, and the bowl itself was in the shape of an almond.

Flowers represent thoughts concerning heaven. Their delicate

forms and lovely hues everywhere diffuse beauty and raise the soul towards the source of all good. Trees which grow up from seeds represent the perceptions of divine truths which grow up from the seeds of divine knowledge in the Word : the seed is the Word of God. In the development of a spiritual understanding, there are first thoughts derived from the letter of the Word, these are like leaves ; then there are spiritual thoughts derived from the spiritual understanding of the Word, these are like flowers ; they are inner leaves, of greater delicacy and greater beauty. On each branch there was first the golden pomegranate, representative of the inner views and purposes of good ; then the flower representative of the heavenly thoughts which follow such inward views and aims ! and lastly, the almond-shaped bowl, representative of the fruits of justice, goodness, charity, and piety, to which all real religion tends. The four bowls of the shaft or stem in the centre are expressive of the tendency from within to make the character complete. Four represents conjunction, the conjunction of goodness and truth, and the conjunction of inward and outward goodness ;—affection and act.

The almond tree was ripe, the first of the fruit-bearing trees of Palestine, and here intimates the divine blessing on piety in youth. Its pure white blossoms and its early fruit well typify the loveliness of the religion of the young. How tender is the young heart yearning after eternal things ! How ingenuous, how pure, how straightforward the early thoughts of a soul lighted up with inner wisdom, and all-devoted to the Divine Will. It is like the fresh vernal beauty of the youthful year, and has flowers and almonds full of promise, and full of peace and joy.

How happy will it be for the world when youth are led joyously to a religion awakening all their sympathies for God and goodness, for purity, intelligence, and nobleness of character. Too long has the godless fallacy been believed that there is something mean in gentleness and virtue, something manly in vice. Myriads of ruined minds, hopelessly enfeebled bodies, and mis-spent years of folly have been the result of the pestilential falsehood. Oh may the years be hastened when men will act in relation to immortal souls as they do in all great works, which they expect to be of an enduring character, lay the foundation well and carefully guard against all attacks of corruption, and hope for the crown of great success by acting sedulously on great principles. Each virtuous act is the seed of future virtues. In a pure and noble youth lie the embryos of self-respect, of loving appreciation, of a noble manhood, a successful and useful life,

a home filled with grace and happiness, a green, dignified, honored and esteemed old age, and a blessed eternity. These are what come from the pomegranate, the flower and the almond.

The snuffers and snuff-dishes must form the third subject for our notice.

They were to be made of gold, and of the same mass of gold as the Candlestick itself. They were necessary for the removal of the spent material of the light. There are appliances for the mind which are necessary to remove the crude and outgrown conceptions of our early days. "When I was a child I thought as a child, I spake as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things."

We are constantly gaining experience, and realizing changes. The dreams and the attachments of youth, our manhood has outgrown. The hopes of enthusiasm have been sobered by the realities of life, and many a romantic scheme engendered by the fire of fancy, and full of the rosy hues of generous love has to be laid aside for the less brilliant, but more substantial plans of mature life. The friends of our youth need sometimes to be changed. The haunts of our youth filled as they were with fairy visions, appear very different when we return to them with the sobered impressions of later life.

Yet the utopias of early life were good. They had their use, and did their duty. When we lay them aside it should not be with reckless contempt, but as with golden snuffers.

Our early fancies gilded everything with glory, let them be reverently laid aside. Our early religion seemed to bring us at once to the gates of paradise. Our thoughts derived from the letter of the Word were full of wonder, and full of admiration. We have since learned that we had only entered the outer gate of the way that looketh eastward, (Ezek. xlvii. 1.) that we have far to travel and many battles to fight before we get even a true view into the promised land. The letter is but the lowest part of the golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven, we must mount beyond it to realize its spirit and its life. Our early views, however, served us for the time. They must be laid aside with loving and gentle hands, and kept in loving memories. They must be removed by golden snuffers, and laid in golden snuff-dishes.

Have you ever seen a mother touch with peculiar tenderness some special drawer, lay gently the little clothes from side to side, move delicately the little shoes, the little cap, and when her loving gaze was satisfied, close up with a soft sigh, as if to guard

from ruder notice, all that remained of what she fondly loved. Be sure the golden snuffers had laid in golden snuff-dishes the memories of a lost but blessed past.

There were vessels of olive oil to supply the lamps, (Ex. xxvii. 20), and they were lighted from the fire of the altar of incense.

The oil of charity is ever required to make the light of faith to shine. Those virgins that took no oil with their lamps, found after awhile, that their lamps had gone out. So will it ever be. He who has not charity will find in the hour of death he has lost his faith. The oil of gentle goodness alone keeps up the ability to keep our lights alive, and when the dimness of our states require their friendly help, they can all be lighted from the fire on the altar of incense. Love glowing in prayer will light all our lamps, dispel all our darkness, and fill the sanctuary of our souls with confidence, peace and joy.

Let us consider, lastly, that all the parts of the Candlestick and its appendages were to be made out of the one talent of gold.

God is Infinite Love, and from that infinite love the universe has sprung with its innumerable systems, suns, and worlds, and all their myriad forms of benefit and beauty. So in heaven. The angels are forms of love. Love inspires them with quick impulses to bless. Love blooms in glorious talent. Love delights in serving. Love rejoices in the truth. Love finds blessedness in the humblest thing and multiplies the means of bliss. So in the human mind. Love is the life of man. Love thinks, love learns, love believes, love remembers, love works, love has patience and perseveres. All these things are formed out of the same piece of gold.

Our Lord says, All the law and the prophets hang upon love to God and love to man. And love to man, undoubtedly, flows from love to God. Here, too, then, all things come from the one golden precept—Love.

How unspeakably important is it then that we should pray ever to our Lord for more love, for renewed hearts. Let the sacred fire be always on our altar. Let it never go out. Love rejoices in the truth. Nay, truth is but love drawn out. Love learns at the sacred pages given by the love of God, and the stem, the branches and the bowls of the heavenly lamps expand themselves, and in the beautiful lustre of an enlightened faith grounded in love, we shall be ready when the cry is heard, "the bridegroom cometh," and joyfully go forth to meet him.

SERMON XXXI.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE.

"And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; four-square shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord, throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord."—Exodus xxx. 1—10.

There were three significant, remarkable, and beautiful objects in the holy place before the vail. Upon two of them, the table of shewbread, and the sacred candlestick, we have already dwelt. We come now to speak of the Altar of Incense, which would seem to have been a central object, to be passed whether the priest was going to the light, to the bread, or within the vail.

This altar of shittim wood covered with gold, eighteen inches square, represented the good affections of the heart engaged in worshipping the Lord, the incense representing the prayers and praise which thence arise.

The shittim wood represented righteousness derived from the Lord Jesus Christ, and gold a supreme love for Him. The horns of the altar represented the power of prayer, while the rings and the staves to bear it about, intimate that a prayerful spirit should be with us always. The crown border round about the altar symbolized the sphere of wisdom and love which surround a praying heart, a holy atmosphere of wise and devout tenderness, which testifies that a soul where such an inward altar is, already lives and breathes in the atmosphere of an inward heaven.

The incense to be burnt every morning, represented the worship of the Lord every new day, and every new state; worship

imploring strength from the Lord, and His blessing. The incense every evening represented renewed worship at the close of every day and every state, acknowledging the Lord's goodness and giving thanks to Him.

The altar being square, intimated that sincere worship is perfect in goodness and in truth; while the height being double, is significative of the fact, that in worship, God and man meet and commune together; there is conjunction between them.

The whole subject of this Altar opens to us the divine teaching respecting the nature, origin, and power of worship and of prayer.

That the ascent of prayer from the heart was symbolized by the ascent of incense from the Altar, is expressly taught in the Divine Word. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."—Ps. cxli. 2. Of the converted nations it is said in Isaiah, "They shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord."—Isa. lx. 6. Even in heaven it is said, "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne; and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."—Rev. viii. 3, 4.

That praise and prayer are a spiritual incense, arising from the heart, we almost feel as soon as it is uttered.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

No true religion exists without devotion. We must begin all we do with the spirit of prayer, and if convenient, with the form, too, to secure the Lord's presence and blessing. "Men ought always to pray," said our Divine Saviour, "and not to faint."—Luke xviii. 1. Piety without charity and intelligence is blind, formal, rigid, and condemnatory. Charity without intelligence and piety, is weak, maudling, and indulgent to evil. But piety, with charity and intelligence, make a state of religion in the soul, beautiful as the holy place where stood the Table of Shewbread, the Golden Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense.

The Altar was golden, to show, that all worship should be grounded in love. Too often the Deity is addressed as if men were crouching criminals entreating an angry judge. But it is not so, the Lord desires to be invoked. He taught us to say, "Our

Father, who art in the heavens." He desires that we should come to Him. The altar upon which we offer should be a golden altar. Our incense should be offered to Him from golden affections.

But holiest rite, or longest prayer
That soul can yield, or wisdom frame,
What better import can it bear,
Than "Father, hallowed be thy name."

Sin breeds sorrow. But it is our Heavenly Father's will that our life on earth should be a life of goodness and of joy. "Ask," He says, "and receive, that your joy may be full."—John xv. 24. "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."—John xv. 11. Would we dethrone self and cease from fretfulness, we should behold what a sublime scene of blessedness we occupy in the world which forms our present home. We have a thousand things for which to be thankful, for one of which we can rightfully complain. What blessings we enjoy of light and warmth, of air and beauty, every day that we live! We stand in the midst of innumerable gifts presented to soul and body by Omnipotent and Omnipresent love. Each man is a little universe of faculties, to receive from the great universe innumerable treasures of grace and good. A fretful spirit, like a speck of dust on the pupil of the eye, may shut out a world of loveliness; but how unworthy is such a disposition. How much nobler is the spirit of thankful love, which from the golden altar of a grateful heart sends up the incense of gratitude and thanksgiving. The bulk of our life is blessing, and so should the bulk of our worship be. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for his mercy endureth for ever."

The Altar, then, should be of gold, our worship should proceed from love, and if love has its perfect work in this respect, great power would be the result, instead of that feebleness which we often feel in our regenerating states.

When least we hope, our prayer is heard,
The judgment is averted,
And comes the comfort of thy Word,
When most we seem deserted.

This power resulting from prayer was represented by the horns at the corners of the Altar. The power of truth grounded in love, and exercised in prayer, is wonderful. Oftentimes this power alone will dissipate a host of sorrows and cares, inducing temptations and darkness, and keeping us in a mental prison-house. Could we see the spirit-world around us at such a time, we should see a host of enemies about us, but when prayer has

been uplifted, and the divine strength descended into us, and diffused itself around us, our foes are discomfited and fly, and we can feel that our souls are brought out of prison. "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me."—Ps. cxlii. 7. Horns are the symbols of power, and are very often mentioned in the Word, as for instance, "He shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."—1 Sam. ii. 10. "All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."—Ps. lxxv. 10. "He exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the Lord."—Ps. cxlviii. 14.

It is evident that horns here, and in many other passages in the Word, represent strength, and, therefore, the horns of the Altar of Incense will represent the strength which is attached to prayer and worship.

There was a remarkable exemplification of this, on the occasion when the Israelites engaged in their first struggle against their deadly foes, the Amalekites. Moses stood on the top of a hill engaged in prayer. His rod in his hand, like the horns of the Altar of Incense, the symbol of power. "And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed."—Ex. xvii. 11. Could anything more graphically portray the power of earnest inward prayer. It is the opening of the soul to the Lord. A divine power descends into us, and as surely as the stormy waves of the Sea of Galilee were hushed at the command of Him who said, "Peace be still," so our spiritual storms, and the powers which excite them, sink and pass away before His might who is "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."—Isaiah xxxii. 2. In our daily duties, and our daily life, we must work, but we must also pray. Some pray and do not work. Others work and do not pray. The true position of immortal man in the constant relation in which he stands to the Eternal God, is to work as if everything depended upon his own exertions, but also to pray as if everything depended upon Divine Providence. In this way God operates and man co-operates. God can then bless man as he desires to bless him, by making him humble, and yet strong and good. Prayer fills the soul with fortitude, with clearness of mind, with quiet power. Prayer consoles and comforts. "Come unto me," said

the Lord, "all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—Matt. xi. 28. Let us, then, never forget that the Altar of Incense is not only a beautiful object, and the odour of the incense fragrant and agreeable, but there are horns to that Altar, there is the hiding of the divine power, and when we have tribulation, there, at the foot of the Divine Altar, we shall find peace. But there is also great significance in the command that Aaron should burn incense upon the Altar every morning when he dressed the lamps.

The dressing of the lamps represented the progress and improvement, of which our faith should be the subject every day. Like the virgins of the parable, we should trim our lamps, but better than they, we should trim ours every morning. In each new state experience will deepen our convictions and enlarge our vision. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning."—Sam. iii. 23. So should be our perception and our praise. But while we are trimming our lamps let us never forget the offering up of the incense.

Instruction comes by an outward way, but light by an inward way. Both are needed to clear vision. "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles," (Ps. xliii. 3,) was the prayer of the Psalmist; and it must be the prayer of every one who comes into "light divine." "For with thee is the fountain of light: in thy light shall we see light."—Ps. xxxvi. 9. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."—Ps. xcvi. 11.

If we read the Word always in the spirit of prayer, remembering its high office of furnishing light unto our path, and a lamp unto our feet, we should have its divine truths opened to our minds often in a way but little dreamt of by the worldly wise. Prayer places our souls in the true point of view for discerning divine things, in the true position for receiving divine aid. Let us, then, never forget that when like Aaron we seek every morning to trim our lamps, let us also like him be obedient to the divine command and offer our incense from the golden altar of a loving heart, for with such offerings the Lord is well pleased.

In the evening also when he fired the lamps, the priest was to burn incense.

Days, when distinguished from nights, represent in the Word states of brightness and clearness of mind distinguished from states of obscurity. We have mental days and nights, and they alternate with each other. Now, we are happy, and then, we are

sad ; now, we are in light, and see truth with clearness and rejoice in its beauty, and then we come into dimness and obscurity and scarcely see our way. Some of our mental nights are calm and peaceful. We are tranquil, and delight ourselves with the smaller instructions of heavenly knowledge which come out like stars in our mental sky, although we are sensible it is evening time. Some of our nights are stormy and dark. In grievous temptations they become very dark. Howling winds are around, and we feel as if we were in a waste howling wilderness. "But 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. li. 10.

Whether, however, the nights are calm or stormy, as the priest lighted his lamps, so in all our gloomy states we should confidently bring fully into view the glorious lights of faith. Christians are intended to be "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, that they may shew forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into marvellous light."—1 Peter ii. 9. And when their evenings come they should light their lamps. Let them trust in the Lord. His providence and His kingdom will come brightly out, and where others tremble, they will repose in peace. But let them burn the incense of devout prayer also when they light their lamps. For when Aaron lighted the lamps at even, he was also to burn incense, a perpetual incense throughout their generations.

When we use the truth with prayer, we acknowledge it is the Lord's truth, not ours. The light, is light from heaven.

Did we the sighs we vainly spend,
To heaven in supplications send,
Our cheerful song would oftener be,
Hear what the Lord hath done for me.

Be sure, then, and burn your incense at even.

We are next enjoined, not to offer strange incense thereon. And a very remarkable warning against this is afforded in the lamentable conduct of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Our worship must be scriptural; our prayers must be scriptural. We must not worship from selfish love, for this would be to use strange fire; nor must we use strange humours and strange conceits in the language of our prayers, for these make strange incense. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all (other) things shall be added unto you." Let the Lord's love abide in the heart, and the Lord's words abide in the mind, and then ask what ye

will, and it shall be done unto you. The Lord has taught us how to pray. He has given both the thoughts and the words of prayer. These are the true incense.

The lawless rant which is not in harmony with scripture, either in its objects or its language, is strange incense. In some Roman Catholic countries where the Word is practically ignored, and where multiplied forms and blind devotion are substituted for intelligence and regeneration, there are frequent prayers offered up for the wildest objects, by brigands for instance, for the success of their plundering expeditions. These are surely strange incense indeed. But all prayers for earthly blessings, that regard them alone, or are anxious for their abundance, without submission to the wisdom of that Divine Providence which measures to us all what is eternally good for us, all such prayers are strange incense.

The true spirit of prayer is the spirit that says, Lord, teach us how to pray, and in every event of life lovingly and trustfully adds, "Thy will be done." Let there be no strange incense offered.

It is added, "Nor burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering, neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon."

These offerings were to be made out of the holy place in the outer court. They represented the virtues of religion obtained in the daily work of life. When in any trial we have renounced evil and received good, and from love acknowledged that it is so, we have offered our burnt-offering. When we acknowledge that all our spiritual food, the bread and the wine essential to our spiritual strength, are from the goodness of the Lord, we offer our meat-offering and our drink-offering, but this must be done in our daily walk. We must obey first, and worship after.

No incense is acceptable to the Most High which has not been preceded by obedience. We must do our work in the outer court, and then come to worship in the inner. Vast numbers worship as a substitute for work, or make the whole of religion consist of worship. Both are grievous errors.

The first Christian duty is to forsake sin, to destroy self-will. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."—Mark viii. 30. Worship before this is done, is not grateful to the Lord. It is not incense, it is smoke. To those who are making no effort to conform to His blessed commandments, the Lord says, "When ye come to appear before ME, who hath required this at *your* hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomi-

nation unto me ; the new moons, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with ; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a trouble unto me : I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean : put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes : cease to do evil ; learn to do well."—Isa. i. 12—17. This, therefore, was the ground of the prohibition against bringing the burnt-offering, the meat-offering, or the drink-offering upon the Altar of Incense.

Repentance must first be done ; our evils first laid aside. The Lord Jesus saves us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins. When we have honestly laid aside what we know to be against the Divine Will, as far as our ability will permit, then we may come and worship the Lord ; but not till then. We must not mix in ourselves heaven and hell.

Lastly, we are told, " Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements : once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations : it is most holy to the Lord."

This taking of the blood of the atonement once a year was representative of purification from the Lord. Our worship is pure in proportion as we ourselves become pure. The blood of the atonement represents the Spirit of the Lord flowing from His glorified Humanity. This is the blood that washes us from our sins, both of work and of worship ; this is the blood we must drink to have eternal life. This is the living truth which sanctifies. " Sanctify them by thy truth : thy word is truth." The Altar of Incense was touched with blood once a year, to intimate, that underlying all our progress, in all the great states of our spiritual life, is this spirit of the Lord Jesus. He is the beginning of it ; He also is the end. This will be the case in time ; this also will be the case in eternity, throughout all generations.

SERMON XXXII.

THE OIL FOR THE LAMPS.

"And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil-olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."—Exodus xxvii. 20.

In that remarkable parable of the wise and foolish virgins, in which our Lord teaches that those were saved who had oil in their vessels, and those were lost who had not, it is evident a most important prominence is given to the symbolical character of oil. It is the symbol of inward love, or charity in its highest, purest sense.

This, perhaps, we might conclude from its soothing and valuable qualities, so well representative of kindness ; but if we consider the passages in the Word of God in which the oil itself, and the tree from which it is obtained are presented to us, we shall have no doubt that they both are used to represent principles which are of the highest importance in heaven.

Trees grow up from seeds : they represent, therefore, principles which grow up from instruction until they are clearly perceived and adopted. In divine things, the Word is a granary from which the seeds of all things good are obtained. Our Lord said, **"THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD."**—Luke viii. 11.

But if the seed is the Word, and He who sows it is the Lord, then the trees which grow up from the seed must be the principles which grow up in the soul, and the best trees must symbolize the best principles. The olive occupies the most distinguished place. It is the most valuable tree of the East. The tree is beautiful, though not majestic ; and both the fruit and the oil pressed from it are highly esteemed for food. Kings and priests were anointed with olive-oil, on being fully inaugurated into their important offices ; its branch has been from time immemorial the symbol of peace, and it is most highly esteemed as medicine ; while its use for light is the quality brought before us in the text : **"And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil-olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always."**

In the parable of the trees, the olive was the tree first invited

to reign over the rest ; and in the reply, the value of the oil, and therefore of the loving-kindness of which it corresponds, is strongly placed before us. "But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"—Judges ix. 9. True heavenly love will serve others, but never seek to rule.

The Psalmist describing the highest heavenly character says, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God : I trust in the mercy of God for ever."—Ps. lii. 8.

In heaven itself, the two great essences of good, love to God, and love to man, are described under the name of the two olive trees. "Then answered I and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What are these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? Then said he, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."—Zech. iv. 11, 12, 14. In the book of Revelation also we have the same symbol. The two witnesses for God, are said to be "The two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth."—Rev. xi. 4.

All these uses and notices of the olive in the Word of God, intimate the invaluable character of the principle it designates. Love, especially in its attribute of kindness, is like the olive, the producer of an oil honourable to God and man. Love is spiritual food and spiritual medicine. Love, in its two essential forms, is the essential thing in heaven, and there are no witnesses for God in the Church separate from love to God and love to man. The kindness flowing from love is the oil from the heavenly olive. It is the essential essence of Christianity. Nothing soothes like that.

But the particular lesson afforded in the command before us, like that given in the parable of the virgins in Matthew, is the dependence of light upon love. The oil-olive was for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.

In the parable, the lamps of those who had no oil in their vessels ceased to burn, their lights went out.

We often do not reflect upon this intimate relation between light and love, and learn that love is the essential cause of light. Yet experience teaches that this is undoubtedly the case.

How often do we see persons interested in the doctrines of religion, and setting out in the religious career with alacrity. Their step was vigorous and their light was bright. After a time,

however, they slacken ; they become negligent in their religious duties, and at length are missing altogether ; they have slumbered and slept ; their light has gone out. They had taken scarcely any oil. They had been anxious after the light of religion, but heedless of the far more important part of it,—the love. In all such cases their falling away is only a matter of time. Their lamps are sure to go out. Hence the divine direction in our text, "Command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil-olive, beaten for the light."

When we reflect upon the stupendous issues which depend upon our preparation for heaven, how important does this command appear. Religious light is a beautiful thing. As we learn doctrine after doctrine, and point after point in divine truth expands within our minds, until we see the whole mental atmosphere lighted up with truth, the blessing is great, the scene is lovely. "Whoso followeth the light, shall not walk in darkness." But light is not an end, it is only a means. We have light that we may enter into the principles and do the work of life. Light flows from life, and leads to life.

But if we overlook and neglect this fact, and are satisfied, like the admirers of John the Baptist, to rejoice for an hour in the light, and do no more, we shall have forfeited the great end of our being, the hour of our darkness is not far off. "Command the children of Israel that they bring thee pure oil-olive for the light."

Considering the unspeakably blessed character of love, and seeing how, like mercy, it is twice blessed ; it blesses him that gives, and him that takes, it is wonderful that we should forego so great a possession. "Above all things" said the Apostle "put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."—Col. iii. 14.

It has been well said that to be loved is heavenly, but to love is heaven itself. Love is the centre of every grace. It radiates delight. It is the very life of angels. It is higher than knowledge, higher than talent, higher even than faith. "Now, abideth faith, hope, charity (or love) and the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

Without love the soul is cold, for love gives warmth. Without love the soul is poor, for love is celestial gold. Without love the soul is hard, for love softens and mellows. Without love the soul is stiff and weak, for love is power. Without love the soul is diseased, for love gives health. Without love the soul is dead, for love is life. Children of Israel, not circumscribed by the limits of the old dispensation, but of the Israel

in every age, See "that ye bring pure oil-olive, beaten for the light."

But oil corresponds to loving-kindness, not only in being presented to us so definitely in the Word, but in all its natural properties. How often is the jarring wearing friction of machinery removed by a little oil. And is it not equally so in the wear of human life? How often do minds rudely jostle each other, view with surly unkindness the movements of those around them, and refuse with dry dislike the small courtesies which are essential to comfort in daily life. Sometimes a dead lock is arrived at, and severe distress and damage are threatened until some kind soul comes in, and gently places things in a better light, softens the harsh feelings, and by restoring good humour, leads all to see how much the happiness of life is promoted by a little human oil.

It is said that oil smooths troubled waters, and not only so, but communicates transparency to them also; lost objects are said to have been recovered in shallow waters, by pouring oil upon the surface. It may be so. Certain it is that the troubled waters of human passion are smoothed by the display of kindly feeling. "A soft answer turns away wrath." Many an excitement of boisterous persons has been hushed to calmness, when one gentle spirit has applied itself to allay the storm, and lead the jarring and excited minds, bitter with offended pride, and vehement passion, to own the sway of the Prince of Peace. Often, very often, we fail in our efforts to improve others, because we do not use this softening influence of kindness. They are faulty and we are indignant. They resent our sharpness, and we are still harsher in look, manner and words. We fume at their persistence, and grow keener and sterner, and we are met by equally repellant glances, and harsh, defiant words. We are almost in despair. We say we cannot tell what to do. We are sure we mean right, and we have tried reiterated arguments, repeated admonitions and accusations. We have uttered reproaches without number, and all has not done the good we seek. Try love. Pour this human oil over the troubled surface, and often you will find the human billows sink down and all around be peace. When the mind is calm too, it becomes transparent. When peace has taken the place of passion, we may oftentimes see considerations that had been overlooked, and facts that had been forgotten while all was stormy. Never, then, let us forget this use of mental oil, but remember that it is the divine will that brotherly love should

descend into the human soul like the oil that anointed the head of Aaron. "How good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard : that went down to the skirts of his garments : as the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion : for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

The oil, however, must be pure. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Yet the unregenerate soul is impure, impure to an inconceivable extent. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." How, then, can a pure thing come out of an impure? How can the pure oil be obtained? The answer to these questions is, BY OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD. The apostle Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another with a pure heart fervently : being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." This work of obedience from faith in the Lord Jesus is the only way to purity. We must obey first, just as we are. The commandments of the Lord are chiefly negative. As we refrain from doing the things forbidden, the Lord purifies the soul. "And 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."

Our motives may be so alloyed by selfishness for a considerable time, that we scarcely know or think that our efforts can be at all blessed by the Lord. But let us persevere in prayer to the Lord Jesus, the manifested God ; in reading the Word, in judging ourselves, in repudiating every known evil, in cultivating all the virtues of our station and employment, and we shall find our efforts crowned with confidence and humble trust, with heartfelt satisfaction and peace. Thus will the olive tree of loving principle grow up within us, and we shall obtain pure oil-olive.

The oil, it is said, must be BEATEN, beaten for the light. The softening influence of tribulation is well-known. None have so deep a sympathy for others as they who have themselves suffered. "Sweet are the uses of adversity." The soul that is full of self-sufficiency, because in the youth and buoyancy of life it has known no trouble, may be a fair field, but it will mainly be a fallow one, until sorrow breaks it up. The spirit needs to be broken, and if rough experiences are

required they must be given. No angel ever reached heaven, but who came there through much tribulation. Temptation, trial, loss, years of sickness and suffering, are all cheap payments, if they fit us for eternal joy.

Then welcome the earthquake, the wind, and the storm,
If these to the Spirit of Jesus conform.

The heart must be broken and contrite, ere it can be the fit abode for the divine love. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise."

It is sometimes a great mystery to the enquiring mind, that many of the evil are among the most prosperous of the earth, and many of the good are sorely tried. The Psalmist confesses a similar perplexity, "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. When I thought to know this it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

They who cannot bear trials, or would not benefit by them, do not have them. They who can only be made useful in the world by directing their affairs in prosperity are allowed to subserve the Providence of the Most High in the only way possible for them. They will not bear being beaten, nor would they yield oil. They have gathered the riches of earth: they have increased their balance at their bankers: they have surrounded themselves with the signs of prosperity and splendour. For these things they worked, and they have them. They did large service to society, and they have their reward. But when death comes, and they have no riches within, how poor, how miserable, how blind, and how naked, are they! Not the least of all their wealth can go with them, and that which they could have taken, they have despised and neglected. Their life has been a failure, their success has been their direst defeat.

"Blessed are they that mourn," said our Lord,⁵ "for they shall be comforted." "They who sow in tears shall reap in joy." The oil must be pure and beaten. Nay, how can it be pure without being beaten! No great good is ever arrived at, without much suffering. Of all the good, it must be said, "These are they that have come out of much tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

But the last particular to which we would call attention, is, that the oil is supplied to feed the light. Without the

oil the light would go out. The relation in the mind between love and truth is not always regarded as equally close with that between the oil and the light. It is, however, really so. Love is not only the hidden fire that sets the intellect to work, but the quality of the love which actuates anyone gives a quality to his intellect. Where there is a love for truth, truth is rapidly acquired. Where that love of truth is powerful, deep, and persevering, there will be a constant meditation upon truth, a constant application to the Word of God, a constant turning to the inner light streaming in from the sun of heaven. Hence, the inner lamps will be trimmed, they will be lighted up whenever required, they will burn always.

How many there are who overlook this dependency of the intellect upon the state of the will, and hence, deny that a thing is true because *they* do not see it. They have made no effort to see it. They have turned their face another way, and when the great things of eternity have been brought plainly and blankly before them, they have closed their eyes, and then stolidly declared they do not see. It is utterly impossible they should see divine things unless they first come into the love of seeing them. They must cherish that love in trials and difficulties, until it becomes purified by affliction and grief; and then, like the pure oil-olive which has been beaten, it is supplied to the intellect, the lamp of the mind always. How far more abundant would be our reception of truth, if we constantly prayed for more love. The little pot of oil belonging to the widow at the command of the prophet, flowed on as long as she brought vessels to receive it, and by it she freed her children, and if we sought constantly more oil, as well as more light, we should doubtless obtain both in greater abundance.

The worldling who scarcely gives a care or a thought to the things belonging to his peace, complains that they are not all perfectly simple and easy. They soon become easy to him who desires to understand them. Let a person grow in love, and the truths of love will rapidly multiply within him. Let him grow in heavenly-mindedness, and the truths of heaven will become plainer and plainer every day. "Unto you," said the Lord, "it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but not to them that are without." We enter into divine things by love. Until we love, we are without. We cannot know the things of heaven by one sense only, that of seeing; we must feel them, touch them, taste them, and thus live in them, to know them. In the magnificent vision of the wheels recorded in Ezekiel i,

the prophet saw wheels wonderful in their construction and their grandeur, and to each wheel there was a living one like fire. When the living ones went, the wheels went; when the living ones stood, the wheels stood. Is it not ever so? When the heart becomes cold, the wheels of progress stand; when the heart becomes ardent, the wheels roll rapidly on. What steam-engine works unless the fire is kindled? what lungs play, unless the heart is beating? Though in the order of time we are led by truth to goodness; having got goodness it will enrich our truth abundantly; it will give us particulars and details; "the little one will become a thousand, and the small one a great nation."

How different a world would this be, if every Christian were as anxious after oil as he is after light! "The oil of joy would be given for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The cold, harsh speech, the bitter taunt, the scornful insult, would never then be heard; but gentle counsel, loving sympathy, joyous calls to duty would cheer the earnest, and reclaim the erring.

Oh! loving and forgiving—
 Ye angel-words of earth;
 Years were not worth the living,
 If ye, too, had not birth!
 Oh! loving and forbearing—
 How sweet your mission here;
 The grief that ye are sharing
 Hath blessings in its tear.

Oh, that all the children of the spiritual Israel felt the divine command, "Bring ye pure oil-olive, beaten for the light!" How much more light would come! and how much more gentle it would be! The heart filled with the spirit of love from the Lord would diffuse around itself an atmosphere of heaven. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak, and the light within would shed a light around. A religion without celestial oil is cold, hard, and ungenial; but a religion of love is blest in itself, and blesses others.

Let us pray, then, for that obedience of life, and study of the Word, which will enable the trees of righteousness to grow up in our minds, especially those most valuable of all, the holy olive trees of love to God, and charity to man. May our Divine Saviour give us power to bear the discipline of life, so that the oil of loving-kindness and tender sympathy may ever flow within, and we may be able to utter the words of grateful thanksgiving. "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

SERMON XXXIII.

THE VAIL.

“And thou shalt make a veil, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work : with cherubim shall it be made : And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold : their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony : and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.”—Exodus xxvi. 31—33.

Things are not what they seem. All things are veiled. The whole created universe is the veil or investiture of the Deity, The divine love clothes itself with the divine wisdom, and this with the divine power which creates and sustains the universe, “in which we live and move and have our being.”

“Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment : who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain :” is the sublime utterance of the Psalmist, Ps. civ. 2. “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth : and the heavens are the work of thy hands. As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.”—Ps. cii. 25, 26. Systems, suns, and worlds, are all the gorgeous covering of the Spirit of God, the veil of the eternal love. “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.

That which is true of the universe as a whole, is true also of every part. Each grain has its covering, each flower its sheath, each tree its bark. The body is a covering of the soul. The brain has its covering, the heart, the lungs. Each vessel has its skin. All things are veiled.

A little reflection will teach us that this must be so. Things cannot manifest themselves but by covering themselves with a veil, which adapts and accommodates them to the object to which they tend. Love can only manifest itself in thought ; in burning

thought perhaps, but yet in thought. Thoughts can only manifest themselves in words. All things manifested are but clothings, fold upon fold it may be, but yet clothings of inner essences which they cover and protect, and yet reveal.

Such are the meditations which flow in upon us while we contemplate the Vail of the tabernacle.

The Vail was the protection for the ark, the mercy seat, and the commandments: these were within the Vail. It was the division between the Holy of holies, and the holy place. It concealed the holiest things from common gaze; yet its colours, and its embroidery revealed their true and holy character.

The whole tabernacle represented heaven; the most holy place, the inmost heaven. There the angels are filled with highest love, as all the objects within the Vail, except the tables of the commandments, were golden. The appearance within was simple though the objects were immensely valuable. And so, probably, the child-like ones who inhabit the highest heaven, and who unite the highest innocence with the highest wisdom, to those who see them would appear simple, unadorned, and thus adorned the most. "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay:" our Lord said, "for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."—Matt. v. 37. Unutterable things were experienced within the vail, for there the Lord revealed Himself in the glories of divine splendour; but still, the ordinary state of things there would be a holy simplicity, yet containing within itself things of divinest worth. The Lord had there written the treasures of His commandments, as He writes them on the hearts of those with whom His new covenant is perfectly made. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."—Jer. xxxi. 33.

The divine simplicity of the Holy of holies, yet containing the commandments of God in the ark, would seem to correspond to the inmost degree of a soul entirely ruled by the Lord. Of such an one it is written, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee."—Ps. cxix. 11. And, again, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."—Ps. li. 6. The law of the Lord, surrounded and embraced by supreme love, forms the inmost of a celestial man, and of the highest heaven, the abode of celestial men, who have now become angels.

We know but little of what took place there. It represented the ineffable. The blessedness of the inmost heaven is to man in this world very faintly comprehensible. The Apostle, speaking it is believed of his own experience, says, he knew a man caught

up to the third heaven, which he calls paradise, who there heard unspeakable words, 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. The thoughts, the views, the deep raptures of the angels of the third heaven must be so immensely different from those of men, as to be almost inconceivable. Yet in some of their most general characteristics, we may obtain a faint idea of them. They would be feelings and thoughts of child-like innocence, including entire dependence on the Lord. Secondly, they would be feelings and thoughts of love to the Lord. And, thirdly, they must include the raptures caused by the divine presence. "There," said the Lord, "I will meet with thee, and commune with thee, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony."—Exodus xxv. 22.

First, then, the deep peace of the celestial angels, and of celestial men, which comes from entire child-like dependence on the Lord, was represented by the silence within the Vail. "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."—Ps. cxix. 165.

The Lord Jesus presented this attribute of the highest angels very impressively, when He was asked by His disciples, who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He 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."—Matt. xviii. 2—4.

When we consider the fretful anxieties which are so common among men; the wearying cares, and restless fears which afflict so many; when we remember the thousand complaints which are often made, because we do not have something which we do not need, and which would do us no good; when we reflect how we pain ourselves often at the thought of troubles which may never come, or by the time they do come will find us well prepared, how strongly do we see the contrast our worldly states present to the deep peace of the celestial, the "peace of God which passes all understanding."

What a blessed state is that of a soul at rest! How calm is every feeling! How deep and heart-felt the satisfaction! It is like a morning sun-rise without clouds. All is calm, bright, serene, and happy. The birds are carolling their joy, but everything else is still. It is said of the mountain on which Abraham had been willing to offer up Isaac, that there is written upon it to this day, "THE LORD WILL PROVIDE." So in the celestial state. In that mountain of inmost, holy love, distrust can never come. Heart-felt confidence ever soars far above the region of anxiety, and so completely removes all fear for the morrow, that

the soul is like a child at the lap of its Infinite Heavenly Father, and no cloud ever dims the sweet assurance, "The Lord will provide." "Surely," said the Psalmist, describing this state, "I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother : my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever."—Ps. cxxxii. 2, 3. This, then, is the deep ground of the highest happiness, "within the Vail."

The man that feels interior peace,
Alone can know its worth ;
From wisdom, love, and righteousness,
This peace derives its birth.

The second source of happiness is, the participation by the celestial, of the love which flows into them from the Divine Being, and which disposes them to feel interior joy in co-operating with Him. His joy is in them, and their joy is full. "He that dwells in love dwells in God, for God is love." From inmost love to the Lord they not only have perfect peace, but in the ministries of heaven they have perfect joy.

Their mutual love flowing from love to the Lord, fills them with life and bliss. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."

The joys of love are not so much the joys of receiving as the joys of giving, of imparting, of doing, of adding to the bliss of others. It is a central bliss ; a delight in radiating ; a joy in itself in imparting joy to others ; a joy unspeakable, deep, silent, full. Such is the divine joy. Systems, suns, and worlds are formed that He may create an ever-increasing number of immortal souls, and train them up for heaven. He creates that He may bless ; He teaches that He may bless ; He redeems, He saves, He regenerates, that He may bless. Men can add nothing to Him. When they worship and praise Him, it is but that they may receive more of His wisdom, more of celestial ability and more of peace. The sun of nature is for ever pouring forth its heat and splendour, and thus images to all the Sun of heaven. The best of the angels, those who belong to the world within the vail, and those men who are like them—who turn many to righteousness, shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and are blest in their degree with a love like His. Oh, that men would everywhere emulate this glorious, god-like principle and taste its ineffable joy. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Everyone knows the happiness that parents have in giving to their children ; that friends have in imparting to those towards whom they feel affectionately ; the patriot has in labouring for his country. The celestial love of others is all this

deepened and purified by principle flowing from the love of God, and filled according to the glowing language of the Prophet with "peace like a river, and with righteousness like the waves of the sea."—Isa. xlviii. 18.

Within the Vail, thirdly, there is from time to time the presence of the Lord Himself. "There I will meet with thee, and commune with thee." All that is involved in this promise of promises, it is impossible to express. The soul that yearns after communion with its God and Saviour, will feel, rather than be able to describe, the unutterable bliss which is enjoyed in the presence of the Lord, and in communing with Him.

The divine promise to Abram was, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."—Gen. xv. 1. The divine love itself is the soul and centre of every blessing, conjunction with that is its own exceeding great reward. He who is conjoined with the Lord, is conjoined with everything holy, pure and good. The yearning of the truly converted soul is ever that of the Psalmist, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy loving-kindness, is better than life: my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live, I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips."—Ps. lxxiii. 1—5.

The ecstasies of interior delight which are experienced by the soul in holy communion with the Lord within the Vail, are only to be expressed in Scriptural language as "fulness of joy." It is as if every fibre thrilled with delight. It is joy welling up from the very depth and centre of our being. It is a bliss that fills the understanding and passes all understanding; a bliss unspeakable, divine. The soul filled with this rapture exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Such is the blessedness that fills the highest heaven, and fills the soul of him who has progressed in the path of regeneration until he has entered into the Holy of holies.

But let us now pass on to consider the Vail itself. And, here, allow me to call your attention to the fact that in all true divine coverings, the objects sought are two-fold, protection and revelation. The heavens not only clothe the divine principles of love and wisdom which sustain them, but they reveal them. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work."

This two-fold attribute is very manifest in the skin, which may be regarded as the veil of the human body. It covers and protects the exquisite textures underneath. It defends them from cold and other injuries. It is also a revealer not only of the condition of the body, but also of the emotions of the mind. Fear blanches the skin, modesty covers it with blushes. Care and jealousy make the skin sallow, and joy covers it with a fresh and rosy hue. Thus that covering which is most exquisitely woven to conceal the wondrous forms of flesh and vessel, is yet a mirror to reveal the general play of feelings and sentiments which are colouring both mind and body.

In like manner the Veil of the Holy of holies was a covering to preserve the precious things therein from intrusive gaze or approach. At the same time the colours and the structure of the Veil are representative of the principles which prevailed within. The Veil manifested the Holy of holies as well as protected it.

The Veil is said to be of cunning-work in fine linen, of the colours blue, purple and scarlet, with figures of cherubim upon it, run in, of gold. The Hebrew words rendered cunning-work, should be, the work of an embroiderer. In the Scriptures there are mentioned three kinds of workers in the production of cloth: there is one word for the worker in one colour; another for the worker in three colours; and still a third, when in addition to the three colours, a thread of gold was introduced. It is this latter term which is here used.

The Veil, then, represented the principles of celestial men, and of the celestial heaven, as they are represented to others, or as they are portrayed in the intellect. The intellect is a cunning-worker, it weaves the tissues of truth into beautiful forms, and clothes the soul with its manufactures. "The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."—Rev. xix. 8.

Truths are acquired line upon line. It is the intellect that takes them and weaves them into a system and adapts them to our peculiar needs. Love without truths cannot describe itself; it must appear in the intellect and there arrange its sentiments so that they can be visibly perceived. Love there presents its sentiments, hopes, and desires, as a heavenly representation. It is a Veil, but it is a Veil which reveals what is within.

The blue, that deep heavenly colour, is the symbol of heavenly wisdom. The deep blue of the sky represents the deep lessons of spiritual worth and beauty which lie beneath the letter of the Word. The purple, the deepest red, is the colour of love, warm

and hallowed, the royal colour : while scarlet, also a kind of red, the secondary affection, mutual love. These three represent the principles of the celestial man, as they appear in the region of thought. The golden thread of the cherubim woven everywhere in the Vail, represents the spirit of love everywhere entering into all this heavenly system, and guarding it from rude approach.

The cherubim were always guards. And in reality, where love is supreme, as in the state of the soul represented by the Holy of holies and the Vail, love pervades everything like a blessed instinct, impressing its celestial nature upon every thought, every act, and every word. This appearance of the spirit of love throughout our character, will guard us from the undue approach of uncongenial minds, or from injury to the holy sentiments which glow within. Our character becomes then a vail like that of old, displaying blue, purple and scarlet, and everywhere guarded and intersected by the golden cherubim.

The Vail was supported by four pillars of shittim wood, covered with gold, ver. 32. They rested on bases of silver. The Vail hung upon these pillars with golden hooks called taches.

Pillars correspond to principles which support and sustain our convictions.

When we have made principles within, grounded in the recognition of the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, recognising the claims of religion as those of love and faith, inward before the Lord, and outward before men, these convictions are like four firm pillars that will keep us consistent and strong.

The sacred cedar, here called shittim wood, forming everywhere the material which was covered with gold, represents righteousness from the Lord Jesus Christ, the only essence of all true righteousness. He is the Divine Cedar from whom all the good comes which enables man to prepare for heaven, or be a heaven in miniature. "Their righteousness is of me saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17.

True heavenly men surround His righteousness with supreme affection, they cover it on all sides with gold. They feel that from the Lord's mercy all that is valuable in them for time and for eternity is derived, and they bless His holy Name.

The pillars, though covered with gold, rested on bases of silver. In the inferior parts of the tabernacle brass was used. This beautiful arrangement is significative of the order of things in their progression. Love leads to wisdom, wisdom to use. Glowing affections lead to bright thoughts.

The representation of the metals guides to many a hallowed lesson in the Word of God, but to none more important than

this : Let every heavenly affection be kept in vigour until it has made a base for itself in clear thought.

Often do we find heavenly emotions rising within us, tending to virtues and excellences of inestimable worth. We are pleased and edified and blessed for a time, but we let them pass away and never give them a proper basis in clear views and well-defined convictions. Our pillars are not based on silver. Let us be careful to follow the divine plan. The Lord is said to sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and to 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.

Holy love is golden, thought is silvery. Let both be conjoined together and a perfection will be produced which neither has alone.

The little golden hooks by which the Vail was attached to the pillars, will represent the minor affections by which the character is bound together. When we are truly heavenly we have little golden hooks in every direction, strengthening us by countless little ministries of good, in our own minds, and in our circle of action. One of our great poets recommends us to bind our true and tried friends to us with hooks of steel ; permit me to recommend these hooks of gold,—these attachments of heavenly affections, they will be all-powerful to keep away the storm ; they will not rust, and they will last for ever. .

Finally, my beloved hearers, let me ask, have we yet made this Holy of holies and its Vail the dwelling-place of the Most High within our souls ?

Once make a Most Holy Place by inmost adoring love for Him our Father and Saviour, our all in all, and He will meet and bless you at the Mercy Seat. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

The Lord thus enthroned within, goes wherever we go, dwells wherever we dwell. In our combats He fights for us ; in our sorrows gives us peace. He is our refuge and defence, a very present help in the time of trouble, and an unfailing and infinite reward. Where He is, there is light, life, joy and heaven.

Let us, then, pray that the Lord Jesus may dwell in our hearts by faith, that being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth all understanding, and to be filled with the fulness of God.

SERMON XXXIV.

THE HANGING FOR THE DOOR OF THE TENT.

“And thou shalt make a hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.”—Exodus xxvi. 36, 37.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions.” When we recollect the numerous differences in human character, we cannot but accept with gratitude that utterance of our merciful Lord. The man of little reflection is satisfied with thinking of the great simple distinction of the good and the bad, of heaven and hell. But those who think more deeply, see, that the Divine Creator has exhibited His infinity in the varieties of the human mind, as well as in the variety of human faces.

Perfection consists not in sameness, but in the harmony of varied yet conforming parts. These make a grand whole, infinitely richer than could possibly exist from a repetition of similar objects. All nature is therefore a graduated scale, ever differing but ever uniting. So in God’s grander kingdom of the inner spiritual world, variety must reign. There are three grand degrees, three vast kingdoms in the heavenly world; for Paul says he knew a man who was caught up into the third heaven, who heard unspeakable words, 2 Cor. xii. 2—4. There are angels of love, angels of light, and angels of obedience.

We know it is so in the Church,—the Lord’s heaven on earth. Its great divisions, and its varying parts are truly likened by the Apostle to a human body, which has three great portions,—the head, the trunk, and the legs. “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”—1 Cor. xii. 27. “If they were all one member where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand,

I have no need of thee ; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary."—1 Cor. xii. 19—22.

Now, as the Lord of the Church below has so constituted it, that variety in harmony makes its glory and perfection, and as here the Church in order is like one grand human body, so in the heavenly world, where all is in order, the vast and innumerable societies must to the Divine King, whose spirit fills them all with angelic excellence and angelic joy, be as one grand angel.

Thus we can see the reason why the three-fold arrangement should exist there, and there should be the heaven of heavens, and why this should be represented in the tabernacle, by the holy of holies. And thus, too, we may perceive the meaning of the holy place, where the candlestick was the most prominent object, and at the entrance to which was the hanging which we have now more particularly to consider.

The holy place represented the spiritual heaven,—the heaven of those to whom spiritual light has been the most glorious object, and who adore the Lord chiefly as the Father of lights. These are pure and blessed, but their states are not so exalted as are those who have humbled themselves to a profounder degree, and have been exalted by the Lord to regions where He is adored more tenderly as the God of unutterable love.

We are informed in the verse before the text, that in the holy place outside of the vail, the candlestick was on the side of the tabernacle towards the south, while the table of shewbread was placed on the north side.

The light was placed on the side most distinguished, the south being the sun's place when he gives his greatest light, at mid-day. The north, the place for the table of shewbread, represents dimness, or comparative obscurity. They, therefore, whose states are represented by the holy place, are those who prize truth and goodness, represented by the light and the bread, for all true Christians and all angels must receive both ; but those who form the Lord's middle kingdom in the heavens, regard the splendours of truth as chief ; the candlestick is on the south side, the bread of goodness on the north.

Nor is this holy state represented by the holy place, one of low attainment. Few, probably, at the present day attain a state so high. The crying defect of Christians at the present day is indifference to the inner truths of religion, the spirit of the Word of God. A very few things continually repeated, form the stock of religious thought both in the pulpit and among the hearers.

Adam's transgression, the death on the Cross, and our faith, form nearly all that is known by an immense number of professing Christians. They are diligent about earthly science, particularly what relates to their worldly prospects. They enter into all the minutiae of their profession or calling, dwell upon it from morning till night, are skilled in its depths and applications, read books upon the subject, and deem no labour or study too great to secure an abundance of knowledge that may be brought to bear upon the success at which they aim. But in religion they assume it must be very simple, they have not much time to attend to it; they take it for granted that the ministers know all about it, and they pay them to attend to it, and for themselves they have no taste except for their earthly possessions, or the desire of becoming great. Anything but a few simple matters from the letter of the Bible they shrink away from as mystical or spiritual; and if it is introduced to them in conversation, as speedily as possible they glide off and begin to talk about the weather, or the state of trade. The things the angels desire to look into, have no interest for them. They go to a place of worship perhaps, and conduct themselves properly during service, and notice a very few things of the most palpable character, and so satisfy slightly their religious instincts, and conclude they have done their duty and all is right. What, they think, can anybody want with more?

But this is not "hungry and thirsting after righteousness." This is not being "heavenly merchantmen, seeking goodly pearls." This is not "tasting and seeing that the Lord is good." This is not "laying up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust can corrupt." This is not labouring, agonizing, "for the meat which endureth to everlasting life." The treasures of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, are passed by with such minds as hardly worth a care, though they are the very glory of the angels of heaven.

The true disciple of the Lord is first obedient to the divine commands, as given in the letter of the Word. His struggle for a time, is to quit sin in word and deed, and exercise true repentance. For a time, he has serious difficulties in this respect: old habits which came upon him like cobwebs, he finds have the strength of chains; but he prays to the Lord, and perseveres. If he falls now and then from weakness, he rises after each fall, and being faithful he finds the truth of the divine promise, "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."—Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24. After awhile that which was hard in obedience becomes easy. He can walk in the divine commandments, and he finds that the commandments are not grievous.

The very low state of those who embrace religion simply as commands from an all-powerful God, which they must obey to obtain heaven as a reward, or to avoid the pains of everlasting punishment, is indicated by their being called hired servants.

The penitent prodigal said, "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare!" and so it is. The Lord bounteously supplies with blessing even the lowest of His servants—the hired servants ; but those who have a purer love for heavenly things can receive more, and they enjoy more. "Open thy mouth wide, "the Lord says, "and I will fill it."—Ps. lxxxiii. 10. The truths of heaven are of inestimable value for their own sake. The man who by obedience has found the religion of life become easy to him, has a new state opened within him. He pants after the water-brooks. He delights in truth for truth's sake. The Word becomes unspeakably dear to him. He regards it with wonder and delight. He finds the truth makes him free : the truth sanctifies him : the truth fills him with strength, satisfaction, and delight. "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, they shall walk and not faint."—Is. xl. 31.

The Christian who is little concerned about truth, is always weak in faith, always inclined to complain, always in danger of being led astray. There is a lack of true manhood in the religion of such an one. "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem," said the Lord, "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. The love of truth grows as our real regeneration proceeds, and instead of needing to guard our outward walk, we feel that that part of the campaign of life has been victoriously ended. We could not sin in open breach of the commandments, the habit of a virtuous religious life has been fully established with us, and we find in doing the divine commandments there is great reward.

Now, however, our delight is in the beauty and harmony of spiritual truth. "Send out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. 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."—Ps. xliii. 3, 4. We now, with a holier higher meaning than the dying philosopher yearningly exclaim, Light, Lord, more light. "In thy light we shall see light." "With thee is the fountain of light." "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

When we have reached this degree of progress, and our spiritual appetites have been fully awaked, we are prepared to feel the inestimable power and worth of TRUTH.

We come to know that by truths, our faith is formed and strengthened. By truths, we come into higher love for our Lord, and fuller regard for our neighbour. By truths, come intelligence and wisdom ; and by truths regeneration is effected. By truths, we are prepared for temptations, and we conquer when we are tempted. By truths, we detect what is evil or false in our own minds, and we obtain purification. By truths, the Church exists, and by them also heaven exists : "by the Word of the Lord were the heavens made." By truths, our minds grow in order, our habits become more thoroughly those which conform to a heavenly standard. By truths, our conscience is awakened and perfected. By truths, our souls are enriched by things of beauty : we exchange the spirit of heaviness for the garments of praise ; we obtain the oil of joy for mourning. By truths, the spirit itself becomes more beautiful ; the eye gleams with hope, the heart is blest with confidence, and fear gives place to peace. By truths, the Word becomes more dear to us : its spirit and life open like fresh fountains from hill and valley : the birds of heaven sing for us, the flowers of paradise bloom, and the little hills rejoice on every side. By truths, death loses its terrors, and is known to be a messenger sent by our Lord to touch the shackles which bind us to earth, and while they sink away, we are led by angelic guides to a better, brighter home. By truths, we become familiar with the glories of heaven. To enter into the spiritual state in which these sacred privileges are enjoyed, is to enter into the holy place, the middle apartment of the tabernacle, where the golden candlestick is on the south or right hand, and the altar of shewbread, on the north.

How much is it to be lamented, that to a very large extent Christians are deprived of the blessings, which truths afford, by being told to be content with a simple reliance on mysterious dogmas, which they cannot understand now, but which will be made plain after death. Come to church and worship, say some, and that will be enough. Do not trouble yourself about light,

mysterious darkness is better, and so the blind lead the blind and both fall into the ditch.

The same holy place which contained the candlestick, and the altar of shewbread, contained the altar of incense ; but the incense never ascended without the candlestick being first lighted. O Lord of the worlds of light, kindle in our hearts an ever increasing love of thy Truths, which are the light of heaven.

The "HANGING" at the door of the holy place, represents the principles by which we may enter into the inner state of heavenly light. The "Hanging" was made of similar material to the vail, and of similar colours with one notable exception, there was no golden thread, forming cherubim.

The Holy of holies represents the highest degree of Christianity, and the highest heaven, where love is supreme ; the golden thread the symbol of this highest, this celestial love, intersected every part both within and on the vail. But the holy place representing a state and a heaven not so holy, everything else is there, but the cherubim formed of the golden thread are wanting. The fine twined linen, wrought with needlework was there, the blue, the purple and the scarlet, these things in the spiritual sense, representing the sacred principles within. They represent the same great essentials of religion which prevail in the highest heaven, but received not so much from the highest love, as from the intellect chiefly, and the heart secondarily.

The blue, beautiful and deep but somewhat cold, represents the things of the spirit of the Word, which like the vast regions of the upper sky are peaceful, lovely, and serene, but lie not near us. They are interior truths. To get them we must pierce through the clouds of the letter and realize the glory beyond. The ephod, the inner robe of the high priest was blue. Ex. xxxix. 22.* The two colours derived from red, the colour of fire, that is, the purple and the scarlet, represent the two essential affections of all religion, love to the Lord, the purple ; and love to our neighbour, the scarlet. In a good sense these two colours represent heavenly virtues, in the opposite sense, vices. "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."

The "HANGING," then, was of the three colours, to teach us that the three great principles of religion, faith in the truth, love to the Lord, and love to our neighbour, are essential to all

* The fringe of the robe, to remind the Israelites of the commandments, was blue.

spiritual progress, whether we enter the spiritual or celestial states. In the one, however, we receive them from an intellectual ground, and in the other, with our highest affection.

The "Hanging" was the work of the needle, because the work of the needle represents the labours of the intellect. The subtle operation of intellectual effort, combining truths together and associating them in firm and beautiful order, is spiritual needle-work. To collect, and combine, and weave together the lines of heavenly wisdom which have been given us from time to time, and make them into a beautiful system, is a spiritual work of the highest importance. When the Church is described as the king's daughter, all glorious within : with her raiment of wrought gold, it is written, "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work."—Ps. xlv. 14. The Divine Will is, that the intellect as well as the heart shall be engaged in forming the robe of righteousness. Too many neglect this spiritual weaving, and never get a heavenly robe that will truly adorn and shield them in their journey of spiritual life.

The wicked weave the spider's web.—Isa. lix. 5. They busily form their meshes and oftentimes catch the unwary in their toils. Surely, then the good should be equally diligent in making their best robes, their wedding garment for heaven, and that curtain also of heavenly truth which manifests in the blue, purple, and scarlet, the solemn religious conviction by which they live. This is to arrange them by needle-work, and thus let their spirit and their principles be seen and read of all men.

The Curtain was to be hung on five pillars, on which it should be hooked with golden hooks. The bases of these pillars were to be formed of brass.

The pillars of shittim-wood overlaid with gold represent, as we have shewn on other occasions, righteousness from the Lord Jesus Christ, its true and only source. The pillars supporting the Curtain represent the strength of full conviction, supporting what we believe to be right, with firm and steady principle, derived from the Lord. The cedar wood of shittim, formed the only wood used in the tabernacle, to teach us that all our righteousness is derived from the Glorified Humanity of our Lord. His spirit received into us makes the Church in us, and constitutes a heaven within. "If any man has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—Rom. viii. 9.

The pillars were five, because that number is used to denote what is sufficient in relation to truth. The five wise virgins, and five foolish, represented all those of both characters, who had truth

sufficient for their spiritual journey. The five barley loaves by which the five thousand were fed by the Lord, had the same spiritual signification. It represented a sufficient supply of instruction and strength.

The last circumstance to which we would draw your attention is that of these pillars resting on bases of brass. We are told that the pillars which supported the vail rested on silver. Here the pillars rest, and terminate on brass.

The reason of this variety will suggest many instructive lessons if we remember the correspondence or symbolism of the metals.

The gold of celestial love, the fine gold which our Lord desires we should buy of Him (Rev. iii. 18), suggests and gives rise to the bright lessons of inward truth of which silver is the corresponding figure. But the truth of the spiritual degree of the mind, represented by the holy place and its furniture, suggests and terminate sin outward goodness, represented by brass,—the good of being useful to our neighbour. Because of this spiritual use of the metals the Lord said by the prophet, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron."—Isa. lx. 17.

Our Redeemer is always seeking to advance us higher, and to make our states fuller. He takes us upwards that we may receive heavenly gold and silver. When we are thus enriched by being inwardly united to the highest good, He then makes that good, fruitful, and full. To the gold He adjoins silver in the inner regions of the soul, and brass in the lower portion of our minds. This is represented by the bases of silver under the vail, and the bases of brass (or copper) under the Hanging.

Let us, then, in contemplating the divine representation of the Tabernacle, and in this instance of the middle region of it, the holy place, diligently and devoutly seek that a holy place for our Heavenly Father may be formed within us, and it may be a fulfilment of that preparation which was symbolized by making the Tabernacle according to the divine pattern, and a realization of the blessed promise: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him."—John xiv. 23.

SERMON XXXV.

THE LAVER FOR WASHING.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal : and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet thereat : when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not ; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not : and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and his seed throughout their generations.”—Exodus xxx. 17—21.

“Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well.” Such is the call and the lesson of all true and sincere religion. So has it been in all ages. So will it be for ever. “O Jerusalem, WASH thine heart from wickedness that thou mayest be saved.” Jer. vi. 14. “If I WASH thee not thou hast no part with me.” John xiii. 8. The germs of evil are in human nature everywhere. That nature has transmitted iniquity from father to child since men began to sin. These evils if not purged away by repentance and regeneration will grow and extend their influence over our whole nature and make it fiendish. Hence, the indispensable necessity of being born again of water and the spirit, under the new creating power of the Lord Jesus.

Truth is the spiritual water, which can alone wash away these defilements of the heart. “Sanctify them through thy TRUTH : thy Word is truth.”—John xvii. 17. “Now are ye clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you.”—John xv. 3. “Seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the TRUTH, through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.”—1 Pet. i. 22.

The impure condition of our nature, such as we have it while unregenerated : and the necessity for its change and regeneration by DIVINE TRUTH, are the cardinal points of all true religion. A resistance to this regeneration, openly or covertly, is the essence

of all false religion. The natural man dislikes change to a better state, and resists it by a thousand devices. Yet upon this one thing, a change from impurity to the love and practice of what is holy, pure, and good, depends our everlasting bliss. O Lord Jesus, help us to understand and deeply and savingly to meditate upon this solemn fact, until we rise to a full conception of its unspeakable importance, and flee from self to Thee, from sin to purity, from hell to heaven.

The real nature of the unchanged heart is set forth by the Lord Himself in Mark vii. 21, 22. He records thirteen of its products. Let us notice the terrible list.

“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 evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

What the heart, that central potency within us, actually is, as seen by Him who knows all its secret tendencies and inmost character, is abundantly declared by experience.

What is history, but a terrible record of wondrously gifted beings everywhere tainted with folly and sin, everywhere, more or less, miserable from self-inflicted sorrow. What is virtue, but victory over ourselves? What is vice, but the unchecked play of our lusts?

Our childhood and youth are moderated and softened by the good tendencies implanted by the Lord in our nature, by the courtesies of society, and by education. An amiable covering, more or less deep, veils the interior proclivities of our fallen characters from others, and to a great extent from ourselves, but the tendency to disorder and misery is ever there. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”—Jer. xvii.

Look at that modest boy gentle and graceful, as Nero in youth is said to have been. Is there anything in him that will develop itself in cruelty, debauchery, meanness, and perfidy? Let the after life of Nero answer. Regard that elegant young lady. How lovely she seems! how delicate, how pure-minded! How refined is the grace of her every movement! How sweet a courtesy is expressed in all her words, how sparkling is the playfulness of her wit! How winning her demeanour, how tender her sympathies! Can she have within her the germs of vanity, passion, pollution, spite, malice, and murder? Alas, multiplied experience teaches that the instances are innumerable of the gentle damsel successively becoming the stormy housewife, the

keen, bitter and jealous termagant, the sanguinary murderess. Catherine de Medici, bright in youthful innocence in her early days, lived to incite her frantic son to the cruel massacres of St. Bartholomew. From the simple purity of the early letters of the unhappy Mary Stuart, who could have predicted the conduct which lowered her to become the adulterous partner of the coarse and brutal Bothwell. Oh yes, the taint is universal. Time brings up in all of us those evils which lay deeply hidden, and which must be subdued and rooted out, or they will deprave and degrade the whole man, making him in affections fiendish, in intellect insane.

Look around and see how universal is SELF. Mark how vanity, pride, self-seeking, greediness, continually meet us in private and public life. Then how wide-spread is dishonesty. It is lamentably prevalent in its coarse form, where it is met by human law, but what is that to the more subtle forms of fraudulent dealings, adulterations, want of integrity in business, over-reaching, and taking advantage of others in such cases as human law cannot touch.

Then survey the world of impurity. How wide-spread, and how flagrant are the offences which force themselves upon open notice; offences against that central pillar of society, and of human comfort, the sacred institution of marriage. The pollutions of the heart send out corrupted streams that defile and degrade maidenhood, and matron-life alike, and not only degrade the tone of society, and desecrate homes, but give rise to crimes which ever and anon make us shudder at the horrid spectacle, and gaze with astonishment and abhorrence at the abysses of human crime.

From time to time arise those human butcheries, those multiplied horrors, whose single name is war. Then come scenes in which, suspended law permits villanies which are usually restrained in civilized lands, to utter and enact their terrible atrocities unchecked, and all are compelled to own that maddened lusts turn man into a fiend.

These are the things that demonstrate the necessity of that purification upon which the Scriptures everywhere insist in ever recurrent precept and illustration, throughout their sacred pages. Ye must be born again of water and the spirit, or ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

It was this great truth that was shadowed by the Prophet's lesson to Syrian Naaman, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times." It was this that was urged in the Psalmist's prayer, "Wash me

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throughly (often) from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." It was this our Lord symbolized by the washing of His disciples' feet, and the declaration to Peter, "If I wash thee not, THOU HAST NO PART IN ME." It is this same purification of the soul by obeying the truth that is the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism. The washing of the outward rite, is the figure of the washing of regeneration, without which no matured soul can enter heaven. All the angels in heaven declare that they have been washed in the divine blood of the Lamb, or in other words, the in-flowing truth which descends from the Lord Jesus and renews the soul in which it circulates.

To teach this truth, then, in the court of the Tabernacle, was placed the Laver for Washing. Before the priest could go forward to worship, he must wash. "They shall wash with water, that they die not ; and it shall be a statute FOR EVER to them."

How solemn, and how instructive is this warning ! "They shall wash with water that they die not." Life and death hang on these words. Wash and be saved ; wash not and die. Such is the sacred law ; such it will ever be ; such it must ever be.

Unpurified souls are not happy,—cannot be happy. While envy and pride are in the heart, there can be no true and lasting happiness in society. The self-seeking, the sneer, the sarcasm, the depreciation of others, the suspicion and the anxiety, the strife and animosity which are their incessant attendants would poison peace, and make heaven impossible.

It is the same with any evil forbidden by the divine commandments. It is impossible to conceive of a heaven composed of souls in which one unconquered sin prevails. "They shall wash with water that they die not," is the eternal law. You cannot conceive of a heaven of rejecters of God, of blasphemers, of disdainers of worship, of thieves, of the unchaste, of the false, and the covetous. It must needs be that a soul must be purged from sinful acts, and from sinful thoughts and desires, or blessedness and peace are impossible to it, and to its surroundings. He who conquers sin by power from the Lord Jesus, lives ; he who does not, dies. The struggle between a man and his sin, is a life and death struggle. He must conquer it, or it will conquer him. He must wash, that he die not.

The water within the Laver, like the water of Baptism, represents purifying truth. Just as water cleanses the body, so truth cleanses the soul. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word

is truth," (John xvii. 17,) said the Lord Jesus. This is the water He gives us in His Word, which is a fountain of living waters. "Whosoever," He says, "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.

Let us pause and admire for a moment the simplicity and the directness of the divine remedy. The defilement is a sin, the remedy is the truth received with love, living water. Let us suppose the sin to which the soul is most prone, to be dishonesty, and its possessor is brought under the influence of the truth. He sees the Lord, the ruler of the universe, who commands him to do justly ; he is assured that he was born for heaven, and he can only prepare for his everlasting inheritance by overcoming his sin. Its heinousness is shown him in a thousand ways, by reflections on the sacred pages. He learns that his sin allies him to the spheres of hell, only bursting these asunder can unite him to heaven. His fears are aroused, and he feels himself lost and helpless, then that same divine truth assures him of a Saviour, and hope tells him He will be his Saviour. This little light is the star of a new morning. Repentance sets in, and with more or less agony, according to constitution and circumstances, the soul turns to a new life. The sinner feels his weakness. He cries to the Lord, "Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape ; incline thine ear unto me, and save me."

Faith at first feeble becomes brighter and brighter, and the joy of the angels over one sinner that repenteth communicates itself to the soul, and ere long in gratitude he cries, "I will praise thee, O 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."

This is the beginning of the heavenly life. The man who thus commences is accepted by the Lord Jesus Christ. He has got on the right side, in the right direction. He has much yet to do, but strength will be given him from day to day. "As his day is, so shall his strength be." He will have many changes to go through, and many foes to encounter, but he will have angelic guardians to succour, and the Almighty Saviour for his Everlasting Friend. Let him wash then, and fear not.

The Laver was to be of brass (more properly copper). This metal like all others takes its place in the great law of correspondences. It is a metal of the gold class, thus far, it is similar in colour, and not brittle. It corresponds to the love of our neighbour,

as gold does to the love of the Lord. By the water being put into a Laver of Brass is signified that we must receive the truth in a disposition to obey it for our neighbour's good. We must shun the evils which do him harm, we must practice the virtues which will contribute to his well-being. We must let our light so shine before men that they will see our good-works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Thus will our water of truth, be received into a laver of Brass, and we shall be able to say with the apostle John in his first epistle, "By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."—iii. 14. This use of brass, as corresponding to the virtue of love to our neighbour, occurs in many other places in the Scriptures. Thus we have in the prophecy announcing our Lord's coming into the world, in Isa. lx. 16, 17, "I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver." The love of their neighbour was the highest love the Jews possessed when the Lord came into the world, and the letter of the Word their highest truth. They might fear, but could not love a God, whose attributes to them had seemed all awful and terrible. But when Emmanuel, the manifested God came, all-loving, all-tender, all-forgiving, to seek and to save that which was lost; then they learned to love, where they before had bowed with dread. For brass He brought gold, and for the iron of the letter, the silver of the spirit of the Holy Word. When the likeness of our Lord was seen by John "His feet were like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace," (Rev. i. 15), to show that in Him all brotherly love has its origin as well as all the higher virtues. Of Asher, the type of the man of charity, who is described when it is said, "Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil," it is further written, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days so shall thy strength be." The shoes are of iron and brass when the precepts of our daily life are the precepts of truth and goodness, adapted to our daily work. Our feet are then shod, as Paul said, "with the preparation of the gospel of peace."—Eph. vi. 16.

To represent this duty, then, the Laver under the dispensation of types, was a Laver of Brass. The water was placed in such a Laver, because the virtue of true and real love to our neighbour, is one with the love of truth. When we have a sincere desire to do our neighbour good, we shall have a sincere regard for the truth that teaches how we may do him good.

Many who have had an earnest regard for the law of charity

to others, and sought to do good to all around them, have often been perplexed for a measure as to what they are called upon to perform. Shall they give all their goods to feed the poor? Shall they give half? Shall they enter upon strange and extraordinary ways of carrying out their love to their neighbour? Shall they give to every one in want? Or what is the rule? The answer to these questions is, Do right to your neighbour in your circumstances, and in his.

The Lord has so constituted the universe that to promote the happiness of all it is only needful for each to do his duty. The play of the divine laws is so perfect, that if they are followed, right will be done, and the world will be happy. If the divine laws are broken, then wrong is visited by misery, and the best corrective is applied; so that in either case to do right to all around us, is the true law of charity. We should receive, then, the water of purification into the Laver of Brass, and wash from every defilement. Or in other words, receive the truth in the love of our neighbour, and remove from ourselves whatever is contrary to that truth, until our lives are pure in word and work.

While we contemplate this sacred and indispensable duty of cleansing the heart and life, that we die not, the reflection forces itself upon us, that often religion itself is perverted. Ceremonies are substituted by some, and a *belief* in our Lord's death for us by others, as an all-sufficient substitute for this change and regeneration of the soul.

Where the heart is unchanged, what are ceremonies, what are prayers, but solemn mockeries, but godless hypocrisies! Go not into the tabernacle without washing, that ye die not. Repent first, adore afterwards. Without a life of purity the Lord says, "Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and the sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting."

And what shall we say to those, who say, that, under the gospel all we have to do is to believe; and all we have to believe is, that Christ died for us. Surely such "make the commandments of God of none effect by their tradition."

Can I be said truly to believe, when I select only a portion of divine truth which promises me every blessing, and set aside those other portions of divine truth which require me in daily life to obey the precepts which prepare me for heaven.

True faith is a hearty confidence in ALL that the Lord teaches. True faith adoringly confesses that our Heavenly Father is infinitely, unspeakably good. He was good as our Creator, good

as our Redeemer and Saviour, good as our Provider and Regenerator. "He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." But true faith does not stop there : it says, He is good in what He teaches, and what He commands, and rejoices in removing what is offensive to Him. True faith is ever saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" True faith perceives the spirit and life of Divine Truth to be the blood of the Lamb, which cleanses from inward sin in motive and in thought ; and the commandment in the letter of the Word, to be the water which removes all outward sin. True faith inspires its receiver who hears the Divine Giver of living water, saying, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely," humbly to accept it and to keep it in a Laver of brass, that he may daily wash that he die not.

We must notice the command which specifies the foot of the Laver, as well as the Laver itself. "Thou shalt make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass." The part of the Laver which receives the water, represents the intellect which receives the truth : the intellect is a species of cup or basin to embrace and hold the water, the wine and the milk which flow from Divine Wisdom. When our Lord Jesus commanded us "to cleanse first the inside of the cup and the platter, and assured us that the outside would become clean also, he referred to the understanding and the will under these names ; for the understanding or intellect is a spiritual vessel for the reception of spiritual drink, while the will is a vessel, like the platter, for the reception of spiritual meat. But while we are diligent to obtain a good vessel-full of heavenly water, we must be careful to remember "his foot also." The foot denotes THE LIFE in harmony with sound views. Our religion must be practical, as well as true. The thoughts must not only be engaged with the beauty of heavenly lessons, but with their practical import. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" were the words of the Saviour God. "Whosoever 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.

Let us, then, never forget the foot of our religion. Let us think justly, and act justly. Have the religion of thought, and the religion of life. Use the Laver and his foot. Without the foot, the Laver would fall. Without life, religion falls. "Blessed are they that do his commandments that they might have right to the tree of life and enter through the gates into the city."

SERMON XXXVI.

THE ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERING.

“And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be four square; and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same; and thou shalt overlay it with brass. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basins, and his flesh-hooks, and his fire-pans; all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. And thou shalt make for it a grate of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.”—Exodus xxvii. 1—8.

The Laver for Washing, and the Altar of Burnt-offering, were placed in the Court of the Tabernacle, to intimate to every Israelite, that two things were required from all who would approach the Lord, purification of the life, and dedication of ourselves to God, so that we might be His, not our own. These two objects met the view of everyone desirous to commune with his Maker. They were thus constant types of the perpetual law that God can only be approached by penitents, who seek to be pure in mind, and in heart offer themselves up to the Lord. The Altar now under contemplation represented the worshipping heart; the fire, the love that animates it. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”—Ps. li. 17. “I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O Lord: for it is good.”—Ps. li. 6.

The sacrifices and burnt-offerings were appointed to represent the offerings-up of the affections to the Lord. The animals offered, whether lamb, or ram, or goat, or bullock, were the types of principles in the mind of the worshipper; the devotion of these to the Lord from love, was represented by the fire of the offering, and their acceptance by the Lord was declared by the words so often used respecting the different sacrifices. “It is the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour unto the

Lord."—Lev. iii. 5—16. Let us notice before proceeding further, the two objects presented even in the outer court, the Altar and the Laver.

The two grand faculties of men must be affected even in one who comes into the outer court of religion. The intellect must be purified, and the heart must glow.

This reference to the two-fold mental nature of man is universal in the Word. It has its deep ground, no doubt, in the sublime nature of the Divine Essence, which is love and wisdom infinite. From these, man, who is an image of God, has will and understanding. The will is for the reception of the divine love, the understanding for the reception of divine wisdom. There are many sub-divisions of each of these grand faculties, but the whole of our attributes may be classified as belonging to these two and their combinations.

All nature is two-fold, all things in animal and vegetable life go in pairs, the male and the female. Owing to this duality of the universe every creature has its partner, and inorganic life is comprised in metals and gases. In man there are the two departments of the brain, the heart and the lungs in the chest, meat and drink in food, the arteries and veins in circulation, and the right and left sides of the whole body. Everything is double, or complementary. In a vast number of instances the stars which we behold as one, are now disclosed to be two of distinct colours which, however, blend into one. All these things are the outbirths of the divine love and wisdom, and refer themselves in their double life to goodness and to truth.

In the outer universe we have heat and light, the two great universal elements of nature, the symbols in the outer world of the love and wisdom of God in the inner. And science appears to make it plainer every day, that all things on earth are light and heat variously combined, condensed, recombined, arranged and multiplied.

In religion, and, indeed, in every pursuit, a man must will, as well as think, or there is no real progress made. There is a reference, therefore, incessantly to these two operations throughout the Word. This is one of its divine characteristics, peculiar to its sublime character as the word of the Most High. Hence, we have, "Make you a new heart, and a right spirit." Hence, there is such frequent reference to nations and people, justice and judgment, joy and gladness, charity and faith, loving and believing, and a host of other dual forms of expression.

This, then, was the reason why in the outer court there were

the Laver, and the Altar of Burnt-offering, to intimate that every devout worshipper must purify his intellect, and must also have the fire of love within his heart. Within the holy place, the Table of Shewbread, and the Candlestick for light, had the same great lesson to teach. O that we might ever faithfully learn it, so that, like John the Baptist, each Christian might be a burning and a shining light; having a new heart and a new spirit; truly just, and of good judgment; one of the nation united by love, and of the people who praise the Lord with joyful lips. The entrance into the outer court, represented the entrance of the Christian into the outer state of the spiritual life. Hence, the objects in the outer courts were not of gold or of silver, which were used in the Holy of holies, but of BRASS. The Laver was of brass, the altar was of shittim wood, covered with brass, (Ex. xxvii. 2) all the vessels belonging to it were to be made of brass, (v. 3) the rings were of brass, the staves were of shittim wood, overlaid with brass. This metal, brass, represents goodwill to our fellow-men.

The serpent of brass, which was raised up in the wilderness to be a symbol of hope and healing to those who were smitten and dying of the plague, was the type of the Lord Jesus as the source of true brotherly love, and all those who trust in Him, receive Him, have faith in Him, as the restorer of charity and good-will, are raised from DEATH TO LIFE. It was a serpent of brass, to denote that the Lord Jesus brought this loving-kindness down to the lowest form of life, signified by the serpent, the life of the senses. God was manifested in the flesh, and went about doing good. Saving faith is to believe in Him, and acquire the same nature, the nature of true charity, from Him. It is said of the prophet Jeremiah, "I will make thee unto this people a fenced BRAZEN WALL, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee and deliver thee, saith the Lord."—Jer. xv. 20.

When the prophet Zechariah saw the vision which represented the future restoration of the Church, he says he saw chariots going forth from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of brass. These two mountains prefiguring to the Prophet's mental eye the divine charities in the Lord, from which flow the truth and good which alone can restore His Church.

Without charity towards our fellow-creatures, there is in reality no religion. There may be knowledge, eloquence, and zeal; there may be faith of a certain kind, though not living faith;

there may be a persuasion that the teachings of religion are all true, but there will be no heavenly virtue that fits us for eternal happiness, or will avail in the sight of God. Hence those strong sayings of the apostle John, so much overlooked by those who imagine that salvation is of faith alone. "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him ; but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."—1 John ii. 10, 11. "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death."—1 John iii. 4. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God : and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."—1 John iv. 7. The apostle Paul is often referred to as if he taught salvation by faith alone ; but in reality his doctrine is the same as that of St. John. He had much to do in the then transition state of the Church, with the controversy against the Judaizers of his day, and faith as used in that controversy meant the Christian religion. When Paul said that we were to be justified by faith without the deeds of the law, he meant we were to be made truly just by Christianity, not by Judaism. But in Christianity, the Apostle always proclaimed that love or charity was chief. "Though," said he, "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. And 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 me nothing. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3, 13.

Surely, this is very different teaching from what is usually attributed to the apostle Paul ; but it is his constant teaching, when he is rightly understood. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another," he said to the Romans, "for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law."—Rom. xiii. 8. "Above ALL THINGS," he said to the Colossians, "put on CHARITY, which is the bond of perfectness."—Col. iii. 14. And in his charge to Timothy, he gave his settled judgment that charity was the very end, the object and the soul of all religion. "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. "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. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this,

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—Gal. v. 14.

There cannot, then, be assuredly any room for doubt that the apostolic teaching was like that of our Divine Saviour Himself, the inculcation of brotherly love as the indispensable requirement, without which no one becomes His disciple. “Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.”—Matt. vii. 12. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” “And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”—Matt. xxv. 40.

This indispensable substance of real religion even for its novitiates then is represented by BRASS, or, as it should be exactly rendered, COPPER, and therefore both the Laver and the Altar of Burnt-offering, and all the appendages to the latter were of this metal.

The Altar was, in reality, a large brazen fire-place five cubits square, having a network of brass, extending from the top downwards to the middle, and there forming a hearth on which the wooden fire could burn, and the sacrifice be roasted.

The heart, or will, of man is in a certain sense always a sort of fire-place. The wicked heart, inflamed by lusts, burns with unhallowed fires. It is thus described by the prophet Hosea, “They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker. For they have made ready their heart like an oven whiles they lie in wait; their baker sleepeth all the night, in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges.”—vii. 4—7. The prophet Isaiah has a similar representation, “Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have at mine hands: ye shall lie down in sorrow.”—l. 11.

While the wicked heart, with its impious lusts, forms a self-consuming and gnawing misery, scorching up and destroying all its good affections, indeed, a hell in miniature, the heart of a good man is an altar of sacrifice. The fire burns there, and mounts to heaven. This fire the Psalmist alludes to when he says, “My heart was hot within me; while I was musing, the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.”—xxxix. 3. The same fire is described as existing with the angels: “Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers flames of fire.”—Ps. civ. 4. The burning desire to bless others, and to adore the Lord, is one that

purifies and exalts the affections, and is indeed kindled from heaven. "He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire," was said of the Lord Jesus.

The fire always burning on the Altar represented the glow of love always existing in a low or an exalting state in the affections of a good man. "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar: it shall never go out," (Lev. vi. 13,) is a perpetual law. It was a symbol in ancient times, it is a reality now. The sacred fire that glows in the bosoms of the good, diffuses within them a sense of the presence of heaven, and around them an atmosphere of warmth, of attraction, of joy and blessing.

The net-work and grate of brass which extended to the half-way down the Altar, and there formed a hearth for the fire to rest on, represents that wonderful blending of tastes, feelings, sensations, and determinations, which we call character.

The impulses of the ruling love, brought to bear on the circumstances and events of life, form principles and habits, until they have made a net-work which receives and retains what is in harmony with its purposes and ends, but will not admit what is repulsive to itself.

The Burnt-offering signifies the worship of the Lord from love, and the net-work of brass extending from the upper part of the altar downwards as far as the middle, that is a cubit and a half, or two feet three inches from the ground, and there forming a grated bottom or hearth, on which the fire and object offered were laid, represented the formation of the character in harmony with such worship.

This formation of character is a wonderful operation. It is the object of our existence in the natural world. Every day we are weaving this network which will determine our indelible future. It is said in the book of Revelation, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow with them."—Rev. xiv. 13. The works which follow with the dead are those inner works which we are performing in the recesses of our own souls, and by which we are weaving our future of blessedness or sorrow. How solemn, and how unspeakably important is the thought, that while our outward doings are seen of men, and result in works which last a longer or a shorter period, but are all perishable, we are by the same acts doing inner works within our own souls which are everlasting. Yet, it is manifestly so. From the ruling love within we are forming a wondrous net-work downwards, not to the bottom,

but to the middle, for this inner character of the will does not come to the outside, it forms the inner texture, which we call our principles, our real disposition. What this is, will our future be. If formed of a network of brotherly love, it will be a fit ground-work from which we can adore the Lord, and will glow with a holy warmth to all around. It will be a network quite open above to all influences from heaven, suffering nothing to arise from below inconsistent with its own heavenly nature. It is network and a grating. Oh may it ever be woven in us, so as to constitute a character responsive to all that is gentle, noble, pure and good, repulsive to all that is mean and false, unholy and impure. Then will the character within, answer to the character of the heaven to which we go, "and we shall go no more out." Rev. iii. 12. The Altar had horns upon the four corners of it, like its whole substance, of shittim wood, overlaid with brass. These horns were the symbols, as horns everywhere in the Word are, of power. "But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off: but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."—Ps. lxxv. 9, 10. Such a state as is denoted by the altar of Burnt-offering has always great power. The quiet influence of piety and goodness is felt wherever the good are found. The force of virtue and wisdom are experienced everywhere when they are really present rebuking and abasing sin, diffusing around them a spirit of good, an atmosphere of contentment, purity, order and progress. There are horns from all the corners of the Altar.

The rings and the staves, by means of which the Altar was carried about, are to indicate that in the living temples, or in the people of the Lord, service should not be confined to a particular place, for to work also is to worship. To pray and to praise, exalting the Lord's goodness, and listening to His Word, are work and worship from the spirit of devotion; to do justly in all our daily proceedings, and earnestly aim at being useful to our fellow-men, are works and worship in the spirit of obedience and usefulness. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his way aright I will shew the salvation of God."—Ps. l. 23.

The pans to receive the ashes, the shovels, the flesh-hooks, and the fire-pans, all made of brass, represent the different suitable powers of the soul, active to do, and active to adore from a spirit of brotherly love. The ruling affection enters into everything. What is suitable to-day to adore and serve the

Lord is laid hold of by the spiritual flesh-hooks of earnest desire, and placed upon the heavenly brazier, as the angels took the coal from the celestial altar, and touched the prophet with hallowed fire.—Isa. vi. 6, 7. What has been of service, but is no longer suitable, is reverently and lovingly laid aside as ashes, in the sweet memories of by-gone days.

One thing we must not omit to notice, there were basins for the drink-offering with every sacrifice. The wine in the basins typifies the presence of truth with every offering. The Lord desires intelligence as well as goodness always. Blind devotion is far from being in accordance with infinite mercy. Let thine eye be single, and thy whole body shall be full of light. Let there be new bottles for the new wine, when the old are laid aside. Let there ever be basins on the altar, basins of brass on the altar of brass, basins of gold on the altar of gold, so that every earnest soul may have not only the spirit of love and devotion, but with this also and ever, the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

Lastly, we must not forget that the substantial mass and groundwork of this altar, was of the same wood as that which enters so largely into the composition of the tabernacle, in fact, the only wood used, the fragrant cedar of shittim. We have seen on other occasions that this wood represents the righteousness derived from the Lord Jesus Christ. "Their righteousness is of me saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17. "Without ME ye can do nothing."—John xv. 5. Every loving desire, every hallowed emotion, every sacred principle and feeling, every pure and sanctified thought is breathed into his obedient servants by the Lord Jesus Christ. The prayer he desires to grant is inspired by Him. His spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought (Rom. viii. 26) and He induces us to cry, Abba, Father.

Like the shittim wood of the Tabernacle and of the Temple, the holy sphere of goodness from the Lord Jesus pervades angels and angelic men, making them like Himself, and then blessing them with Himself. He is to us as the prophet with the child, His hands are on our hands, his eyes upon our eyes, and his mouth upon our mouth, and thus we live again the life of heaven and peace.

Let us pray ever more and more earnestly that whether we adore, or whether we labour, whether we learn, or whether we work, the Lord our Saviour, the Lord our righteousness may be our all in all.

SERMON XXXVII.

THE CURTAINS OF THE TABERNACLE.

“Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim of cunning work shalt thou make them, v. 1. And thou shalt make curtains of goats’ hair, to be a covering upon the tabernacle, eleven curtains shalt thou make, v. 7. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers’ skins.”—Exodus xxvi. 1, 7, 14.

The Tabernacle, as we have often seen, was a figure of the Divine Humanity of the Lord Jesus, of heaven, and also of the Church. We intend on the present occasion to confine our attention to the Church, as the Lord’s heaven upon earth. The curtains which surrounded, covered, and protected the Tabernacle, represented the truths which cover and protect the Church, and all divine things. The complete manner in which the Tabernacle was covered with a threefold covering, represents the abundance and perfection of the truths which defend and illustrate religion. The representation of the Church by the Tabernacle is manifested very frequently in the Word. Thus, we read, “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. Here it is manifest that the Church is meant by the TABERNACLE. In like manner the extension of the Church is expressed by the prophecy of the extension of the Tabernacle. “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation : spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes : for thou shalt break forth on thy right hand and on thy left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”—Isa. liv. 2, 3. And in the book of Revelations, the descent of the principles of heaven to form a church upon earth, is clearly expressed by the declaration, that the Tabernacle of God shall be with men. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the

TABERNACLE of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and 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.”—Rev. xxi. 3, 4. It is clear, then, that the Tabernacle is the symbol of the Church, and hence, it follows that the curtains of the Tabernacle represent the Truths of the Church, since these protect and cover the inner principles of the Church, as the curtains covered and protected the inner and sacred objects of the Tabernacle.

There is a remarkable prophecy concerning the restoration of the Church prefigured by the raising up of the Tabernacle which had fallen down. “In that day will I raise up the Tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up his ruins and I will build it as in the days of old.” Amos ix. 11. It will be well to remark, that in the pattern given for the TABERNACLE, the curtains were complete and covered it all round and on the top with parts abundant and overlapping. Thus we are taught that the truths of the Church are copious and apply to every subject. As there were curtains for the Holy of holies, and curtains for the holy place, curtains for the inside of the Tabernacle, and curtains for the outside, so there are truths for the highest things of the Church, the most holy relating to the Lord ; truths for the middle things of the Church, relating to charity and faith ; and truths of the outer court relating to deeds and words, and all these in abundance.

It is one of the sad results of a fallen state of religion, that truths are valued less and less as the Church declines, and at the end of the Church there are very few truths left, and those few not rightly understood, but perverted, because of the absence of others needful to present to the soul the whole counsel of God.

Our Lord said to the Jews, at the end of their dispensation, “Ye have made the commandments of God of none effect through your traditions.” “Ye love darkness rather than light, because your deeds are evil.” “Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.” The Tabernacle of the Lord at such a time is rent and torn ; the curtains are shreds, and breaches everywhere expose the holy things of the sanctuary to the wild winds and stormy delusions of perverted doctrine. There is no covert from the tempest, no shelter from the storm.

To such a state of things belongs the description of an often much misunderstood portion of the Divine Word. “But we

are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags : and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.”—Isa. lxiv. 6. This is a description not of a true church in vigour, but of a false church in decay : when as the prophet proceeds to say, “There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth himself to take hold of thee” (v. 7 ;) when “the holy cities are a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.”—v. 10.

At such a time there are but remnants of divine truths left ; and those but few and far between. The church is like some old ruined abbey, with broken arches, mutilated windows, groins, corbels, capitals, and all its varied ornaments lying disfigured about,—grand in their ruins, but only ruins.

True religion breathes “glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill towards men.” Look, however, at Judaism, especially in its decline, how repulsive it was to others, how mean and tricky in itself. It made long prayers, but to devour widows’ houses. The commandments might be broken, if compensatory gifts were made to the priests. They were great about tithes, of mint, anise, and cummin, even ; but justice, mercy, and faith were readily set aside.

The prophet said of them, “The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself up in it.”—Isa. xxviii. 20.

How could a man stretch himself out on such a bed as the Jewish system had become. A man, what is man ? A being of grand conceptions, deep thoughts, glorious capabilities, of just and noble principles. A man ! “one that executeth judgment and seeketh the truth, saith the Lord.”—Jer. v. 1. A man is one who recognizes the hand of his God everywhere, in the sublime laws of order which pervade the universe, and nowhere more than in the universe of mind. A man is one who will stoop to nothing mean, selfish, or sectarian ; who has only one standard for himself and for all,—to do unto all men as he would they should do unto him ; who loves all men and strives to do them good. A man, therefore, cannot conceive any doctrines true, which make God a partial or unjust Being. A man would descend to nothing partial or unjust ; would accept nothing but what would promote “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill towards men.”

The old Jewish bed of doctrine, that attributed to the Eternal a special partiality for them—a small tribe of the human race, a fraction, scarcely a thousandth part at their best—while all the

rest of mankind were supposed to be overlooked or condemned ; this would never do for a man. He could not wrap himself up in that. He could see in the Jewish Dispensation one part, an important part of the providential operations of the Almighty. While some nations were illustrating and obtaining the blessings waiting upon obedience to law and duty, as the Romans ; others the development of art, grace, and loveliness, as the Greeks ; others mystical wisdom, as the Egyptians ; so was it given to the Jews to represent in outward observances the principles and states of a church : to be a shadow of good things to come. All these gifts were from the same Lord over all, who is, and who was, and who is to come. There was no monopoly of grace or mercy. The Jews were blessed under the outer law ; the Gentiles under the law within themselves, or by a higher law once given, whose feeble gleams had been handed down dimly, through ever-darkening ages, and still shining through murky superstitions. The same Lord cared for each and for all. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

May we not say the same of religion as too commonly heard at the present day ? A very few statements compose the whole of what many regard as saving faith. The fall of man, the anger of God, and the death of the Saviour, whose merits are said to be applied to those who believe He died for them. These compose the whole system of great numbers who say and who sing that their entire dependence is on "Faith alone."

But may we not again say of this state of theology, "The bed is too short for a man to stretch himself upon it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." Is not such a tabernacle full of breaches ? What is there in such a description to open to us the infinite goodness and grandeur of our Heavenly Father : the grandeur and goodness of that Eternal Love which has originated, and which rules innumerable worlds. What is there worthy of God in the scheme (as it is called) of an irascible Deity proposing a trifling, unreasonable, and useless test to man, and remaining all vengeance until another part of Himself came to sustain the vials of His wrath, and receive all the punishment due to man ?

Surely the ideas of God which make him declare he will put man to death if he eat of a certain fruit, and then does not do it ; which impute to him that he declares his justice cannot be satisfied unless he slay the criminal, and then slays the innocent ; which say he must have an infinite satisfaction for finite wrong, and then is satisfied with a finite death ; these ideas cannot be

the curtains worthily to cover the mercy seat of the Holy of holies. They are mere tatters, containing breaches of every kind.

Surely, eternal love must be unchangeably good. He created all things through the spheres proceeding from His wisdom, His Word, in everlasting order. His truth abideth through all generations. "He stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain, and fills the earth with his riches." He forms an ever increasing number of immortal beings, with the capacity of receiving life from Him, and being filled with His blessings. When they turn from Him they find coldness and death to all that is good. But He, the All-loving, follows them; the whispers of His mercy, and the remonstrances of His Word every moment still say, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" To manifest His love most fully, He came upon earth and lived and died for man, God manifest in the flesh. He glorified His Humanity, to make it a new and living way, for His Holy Spirit to flow into and regenerate His children. He is, therefore, the same Glorious God our Father, Redeemer, Saviour, and Regenerator. These great truths with all the particulars which enter into them are the curtains of the Holiest of all. They preserve the Church's union in thought with her God. There is no disagreement of one attribute of God with another, as of mercy with justice. God thus seen is all mercy. He does all that infinite love can do to save, by regeneration in freedom, every child whom he has made. There is no respect of persons with Him. At the same time, He is all justice. None can enter heaven but those who have been made heavenly by him, while they have been living in obedience to His commandments. In these views there are no breaches, no chinks, no discordances. The curtains all fit, and they are all closed up together.

Here, let us remark, that there were inner curtains and outer ones. The inner curtains were very full, being hung in festoons, and hooked upon golden hooks at about the height of a man,—four cubits, or six feet high. They were spun by the wise-hearted women, (Ex. xxxv. 25,) woven by the wise-hearted men; in blue, purple, and scarlet, and with the golden thread of the embroiderer everywhere enriching the work with cherubim.—Ex. xxvi. 1.

The outer curtains were not full, but were laid plain along the sides and the top of the tabernacle, having an extra portion to hang over in front; they were attached to the tabernacle by hooks of brass. They were three-fold: one of woven goats' hair, another of rams' skins, and a third of badgers' skins.

The inner curtains represented the inner truths of the soul, derived by meditation on the Word of the Lord ; their number beauty and richness being represented by the fulness of the curtains. The golden hooks, or pins, supporting the curtains, will represent the affections of holy love, supporting the truths everywhere diffused in the soul, while the loops of blue represent the purity of these inner meditations. "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

The blue, purple, and scarlet of these inner curtains were not for beauty only, but for wisdom. Blue represents the depth and purity of inner wisdom, the purple and the scarlet being expressive of the love to the Lord, and the mutual love which inner wisdom expresses ever. The golden threads, and cherubic forms inwoven and shining everywhere in the curtains, represented goodness diffused throughout, and appearing in every truth. The whole of these particulars amount to that beautiful description given by the Apostle James of the wisdom which is from above (iii. 17). "The wisdom which is from above is first pure (blue), then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy (purple); and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy (scarlet)"! When the heart is right with the Lord, there are inward sentiments which come down from the Father of lights, which form a system of sentiments, clear, loving, and good, surrounding like these glorious curtains the inmost affections with hallowed principles; everywhere, and in every way illustrating and announcing the presence of deep and holy thought with love to God and man. In this sanctuary of the soul no polluted intrusion is ever permitted. It is the inward, or rather, inmost mind which "delights in the law of God after the inward man." Rom. vii. 22. It is the little centre where the Saviour makes His abode with us, abides in us, and we abide in Him. It is the one inward abode where the truly heavenly minded man yearns to dwell. "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. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me."

The curtains which surrounded and beautified the Holy of holies, and which, with the vail, made that into one apartment, did not stop there; they went forward and surrounded also the holy place. The truths of the inner man do not only rise to the

Lord, they go forward and embrace all things relating to the spiritual and heavenly condition of the neighbour. They care for his faith, and desire to enrich that with an abundance of heavenly wealth. They desire to unveil to him the spirit of the Holy Word, to open, as it were, heaven to him, to unfold the nature of his own soul, to shew him his grand inheritance, and enable him to say : "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places, mine is a goodly heritage." Faith is enriched, and love expanded by the number of truths which are continually being multiplied to the regenerating mind.

The length of the inner curtains was twenty-eight cubits, a number which being compounded of four and seven, denotes the complete and holy character in which goodness predominates.

The outer curtains were threefold, were thirty cubits long, and were, evidently, laid plain upon the Tabernacle, for their length is the same as that of the Tabernacle, only there was one curtain which was to hang over the front, (v. 9) and there was also a portion to hang down behind.—v. 12. The number thirty, compounded of three and ten, designates the quality of their representative character, as being in perfect accordance with literal truth.

The inner curtain of the outer covering was to be of goats' hair, the next of rams' skins, dyed red, and the outer-most of all was of badgers' skins.

The outer covering of divine things is the letter of the Holy Word. When the letter of the Word is truly understood it teaches precisely the same things, though in relation to actual life, as are taught by the spirit of the Word. The goat in the world, and in the Scripture is the symbol of those who are especially earnest in faith. Where the goats are condemned as in Matt. xxv. 33, they represent those who pride themselves upon "Faith alone." When the soul, however, is genuine and true, and delights in the grand truths of revelation, which, like so many sublime rocks on the mountain side, lift the spirit up into the very sunlight of heaven, the goats represent such earnest, vigorous, and delighted spirits, and the goats' hair the thoughts, views and sentiments they make their own. The women spun the hair, the men wove it, and thus the tent, or top, of the Tabernacle was made.

The women denote the affections of the soul ; the men, the intellectual powers. The affections select and draw out the truths of religion towards practical life. They seize hold of sacred truths, and elicit their results idea after idea in linked

sweetness, long drawn out. Men delight more in making systems of them. The intellect, like a busy weaver, compares, combines, connects, arranges, and makes a mental cloth by which it can be covered, defended, and adorned.

The two outer coverings were of skin, one of rams' skins dyed red; the other, that of an animal called a badger, but which was probably a species of deer. The badger is not found out of Europe. The skin of the animal in question was especially commanded to be used in wrapping up the most sacred vessels for removing.—Num. iv. 6, 14. The skin represents, in religion, the outward character, consisting of virtuous words, and works. The rams' skin, dyed red, denote the words of genuine truth, "spoken in love;" the skin of the deer, denote the works of genuine goodness which ever distinguish the Christian.

The skin of the ram, as the male of the sheep, is the appropriate emblem of the intellectual things of charity, while the redness of the skin would represent words that burn with heavenly affection.

But as with the representative sanctuary, whether it was at rest or in motion, the other skin, that, probably, of the soft and gentle deer, was always used for covering, so will loving, just, and gentle deeds, be ever the surrounding of the Christian. Whatever may be passing within, his works will be pure and good. His light will shine in a gentle, courteous, orderly life.

The wicked weave the spider's web, combined of subterfuges and lies. The good weave the fine linen "which is the righteousness of the saints." The wicked spirit, like a spider in his web, lies in wait to ensnare, to entrap, and to devour. The good man robed in purity and truth walks with His Saviour in white, and does not defile his garments. His pavilion also is protected by the covering of goats' hair, in which he can dwell and hold sweet converse with Him who keeps him secretly, and to whom he can say, "Oh, how great is thy goodness, that thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men."—Ps. xxxi. 19.

Let us seek to be such tabernacles of the Most High. And while our supreme aim is to have the spirit of the Lord Jesus within us, yet let us also ask from Him those blessed gifts which will enable us to say, "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 jewels."—Isa. lxi. 10.

SERMON XXXVIII.

THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE.

“And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle.”—Exodus xxvii. 9.

The Court of the Tabernacle, in relation to the Church upon earth, represents the Church visible in the world. The Church before men, in harmony with the sacred things of the heavenly mind, seen only by the Lord, is described by the particulars of the Court erected in accordance with the pattern shewn to Moses, and commanded in the language of the chapter before us.

The courts of the Lord's house, when in heavenly order, are delightful to the true Christian. “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to dwell in thy courts.”—Ps. lxxv. 4. “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord : my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.”—Ps. lxxxiv. 2. “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name : bring an offering, and come unto his courts.”—Ps. xcvi. 8. “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him and bless his name.”—Ps. c. 4.

Let us, therefore, attend to the particulars of the divine directions for the Court of the Lord, and in that shadow of good things to come, learn the principles upon which our court of the Lord's house may be constructed, in obedience to His holy will.

The court was to be one hundred cubits long, by fifty broad.—v. 9.

It was to be surrounded by white hangings of fine twined linen. It was to be supported on the north and south sides by twenty pillars of brass resting on sockets of brass ; but joined at the top by hooks and fillets of silver.—v. 10.

At the east and west ends there were to be ten pillars of brass also resting on sockets of brass, but joined at the top by hooks and fillets of silver.—v. 12.

For the gate of the court, there was to be a hanging of twenty cubits : of blue, purple, and scarlet, made of fine twined linen,

wrought with needle-work, and resting on four pillars.—v. 16. All the vessels of the Tabernacle in the court, and all the pins of the Court were to be made of brass.—v. 19.

The hangings of the Court in general were of fine twined linen, and as the hanging of the door has its colours particularly specified, the inference seems clear, that the hangings generally were colourless, white.

The first particular to which we would draw attention is, the order and gradation visible in the metals and arrangements of the Sanctuary and the Court. The objects within the Sanctuary were of gold. The planks of the Sanctuary were of shittim wood, covered with gold, but resting on bases of silver. The hooks and fillets of the pillars of the Court were of silver, but the pillars themselves, their bases, and the pins of the Court were of brass (copper.) How beautiful is this order. The inner things of love to the Lord, represented by the gold, and resting upon, and flowing into that interior wisdom, which is heavenly silver. Then, in a lower, the inner wisdom represented by silver, flows down into and rests upon the lower things of heavenly goodness, represented by brass; the things of charity and outward deeds of use. So one principle gives rise to another in heavenly order, from the inmost to the outer-most.

He who enters the Lord's court comes first to the things of brass, or to those feelings and duties which his state will then bear. He cannot yet go into high things, but he can do what he is commanded. He can shun evil, do good, and love his brethren. These are represented by things of brass. When the new Christian has become initiated into these lower principles, and made them his own, he will then be brought to things of silver; that is, those pure interior truths which shine to the eye of the mind like bright silver. "The words of the Lord are pure words, they are as silver tried in a furnace of earth." Ps. xii. 6. When he has made the things of silver his own, he will be admitted to those of gold, that is, to the principles in which the highest treasures of heaven consist,—the principles of celestial love. When the Church is in its highest glory it is like Jerusalem, when Solomon's reign was in perfection. All things are of gold, none are of silver. "It was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." How forcibly are we reminded here of that divine prophecy respecting the Lord's coming, "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."

The second particular, to which we should do well to attend, is, that the hangings generally around the Court were of fine white linen which represents the letter of the Word understood in harmony with the divine truth, white. When errors darken the mind they intrude between the soul and the Word, and are like clouds that shade and obscure the sacred heritage of divine revelation, committed to us by the Lord. But when these are removed the Word is like transparent clouds, which temper but do not obscure the brightness of the sun. The whole letter of the Word, from Genesis to Revelation becomes clear, and it forms the outer defence and beauty of our spiritual home, the surrounding enclosure of the Church within.

The hanging for the gate of the Court was of more elaborate workmanship. It was of similar construction to the vail, except that it was without the inwrought golden cherubim. It was to be of blue, purple, and scarlet: of fine twined linen wrought with needle-work, and supported by four pillars of brass.

The three means of entrance, the hanging for the gate of the Court, the hanging for the gate of the holy place, and the Vail or the hanging for the Holy of holies, were similar. They were all of fine twined linen, in the colours of blue, purple, and scarlet, only the vail had in addition, the cherubim of golden thread, worked into its texture. The makers of these different objects are distinguished in the original, by different names. The word for the maker of the white cloth may be simply translated weaver; the maker of the more beautiful hangings is denominated colour-weaver; while the one who formed the more splendid cloth, like that of the vail, is called an embroiderer.

When the Lord is describing what He has done for the Church He says, "I clothed thee also with embroidered work, and shod thee with badger (deer) skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk."—Ezek. xvi. 10.

When the intellect of man, stimulated by the spirit of the Lord, is engaged in forming its views from the genuine letter of the Word, it is doing the office of an intellectual weaver. If this be done faithfully and diligently, it forms a pure and firm mental white cloth of which its spiritual dress is made, and thus it obtains a white robe from Him, beautiful and good as He Himself counselled, when He said, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed."—Rev. iii. 18.

When we enter more interiorly we do a similar work, now not from science, but from faith, and in a higher region of the soul.

When we advance still higher we still recognize the same great principles, but now everywhere filled with love. The golden cherubim are therein, the work of a loving embroiderer.

The hanging for the gate represented the general doctrine of the Church. This forms a gate that introduces to the more interior states and divine treasures of religion. Doctrine is formed of many truths. It must be in harmony with the deep spirit of the Word, as well as be expressed in the letter. Doctrine must elevate the soul to expanded views of God and man. It must lead the soul of the believer to love the Lord above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. Doctrine is a species of epitome of all divine things. Hence its representative was of fine twined linen woven, of blue, purple, and scarlet. Such doctrine is represented by a gate often in the Word. Thus in the Psalms, "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: this GATE of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter."—Ps. cxviii. 19, 20. This gate of the Lord is the doctrine of the Lord. This doctrine filled with heavenly light shining into the soul, is the Lord Himself. Hence He says, "I am Door: by ME if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture."—John x. 9.

The same gate of introductory doctrine was represented in vision to the prophet Ezekiel. "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."—xlvi. 2. The utter gate, or farthest gate, by the way that looketh eastward, is doctrine adapted to a soul in its earliest states of religious life. It has been in the spiritual north,—the region of mist and cold. It longs for a better life, but it fears. It wanders about and feels itself lost and self-condemned. To such a soul the doctrine of the Lord Jesus is as a rainbow that sheds the beautiful light of hope and comfort on the mind. It is the coloured hanging of the Court, of blue, purple, and scarlet. God with us, is the hidden wisdom, which pervades heaven, the wonder of unutterable love, although it is the lesson the simplest mind learns readily. It is milk for babes, and yet a glorious subject which angels desire further to look into. It is the outer gate, but it looketh eastward. It is the hanging of the outer Court, but it is blue. God, becoming man! How simple did this appear when the babe of Bethlehem was seen. Yet in that divine seed of the woman lay all the possibilities of the progress of the world. In that one

fresh centre placed in the vast sphere of humanity, the new and living way, by which the Godhead would redeem and restore man's nature, lay the germs of all churches, schools, and every institution of real Christianity by which the world is humanized, elevated, strengthened, consoled, and blessed. Nor are we to look back only to see its vast import; we must look forward also through long ages perhaps, but through steady progress to the universal triumph of Divine Love and wisdom; when all nations shall be the developed and beautified sections of the grand family of man, the vast nursery for the happy; the seminary of angels. "In that day the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord and his name one."—Zeck. xiv. 9.

May we not well say that this doctrine is at once simple and sublime. It awakens the deepest love and gratitude to the Saviour; it inspires the warmest affection for men. It breathes the spirit that inspired the hallowed lesson, "One is your Father who is in heaven, and all ye are brethren." Such, then, is the signification of the "hanging" of the outer Court, and of its colours of blue, purple, and scarlet.

It was supported by four pillars of brass. The pillar suggests firmness, support, consistency, fixedness. Our Lord says of the man who has overcome his evils, "Him that overcometh I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."—Rev. iii. 12.

The pillars being four, represent completeness and conjunction, their being of brass, or copper, is significative of their being derivatives of brotherly love.

When a man receives the doctrine of the Lord, and determines that from love to his brethren he will imitate his Lord, he has set up this hanging of the outer Court with its four supporting pillars, and he may say like the apostle John, "By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."—1 John iii. 14.

The ten pillars of the east end, and a similar number at the west, the twenty at the north, and a like number at the south, with the hundred cubits in length, and the fifty in breadth of the court, being all compounds of ten, refer to the harmony of all things in the whole Church, and all things in the individual man who is a church, a sanctuary in its least form, with the divine ten commandments. The church is represented in the Gospel by a woman who has ten pieces of silver, (Luke xv. 8) her temptations in relation to all truths is called having tribulation ten days. Rev. ii. 10. The fundamental truths of the divine commandments,

which are the very laws of heaven itself, are those according to which the church is measured. All things in the Church must be done in harmony with them. Where they are not, the Church is not.

The whole circuit of sixty pillars implies that the Church is militant. She must labour for the triumph of goodness and truth. The six days of labour in spiritual as in natural things, ever precedes the Sabbath.

The external church perverted in doctrine and worship, and made subservient to political and selfish purposes, is referred to in those remarkable words to the angel in Rev. xi. 1, 2, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot, forty and two months." When the visible church has lost its life, and become an arena where the lust of power parades itself and imitates the proud dignities of earthly courts, it is no longer of any value in the divine estimation: measure it not, it is given up to the Gentiles. "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, but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant."

How thoroughly has this prophetic declaration been fulfilled! How long has the outer court been given to the Gentiles, and been trodden under feet of men. The sanctuary of the Church, founded by our Lord round the temple of His own glorious body, went on increasing for the first century or two, and its spiritual radiance cleared away the Jewish world, and, eventually, the Roman world. A new heaven and earth were formed. Society was reformed on Christian principles, yet not purely and thoroughly so. The Humanity of the Lord was not altogether seen to be divine. The Father was still regarded in some vague way separate from and above the Son, not in the Son so that He who sees the Son sees the Father. The centre remaining divided, and the Humanity of the Lord regarded as something less than God, the church's power became comparatively feeble, there was room for the lust of power to come into play, and the insane notion to be accepted, that the power of the Lord Jesus had been transferred to the Pope. When the barbarous nations broke into the Roman Empire and found this feeble christianity existing there, it assimilated somewhat to their own states, and

proved acceptable to them on account of its easy admission of their superstitions, lust of power, and glitter of tawdry show. Hence, from this mixture, came the meretricious christianity of Rome. Hence, the outer court was trampled under foot ; and all the selfishness, the lordship, and the vanity of worldliness were transferred to the church, and through many generations the degradation increased. Again "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people."

At the Reformation, matters were but little essentially altered. Many of the branches of the upas-tree of error were lopped off, but the root remained. Three divine persons still divided the Godhead, and one of these, the supreme one, was represented as acting in so arbitrary a manner, and was so little regardful of the real truthfulness of things that He could impute evils they had never committed to generations unborn ; he could reward where there was no virtue, and punish where there was no sin. It was self-will still deified. The commandments of God were still not regarded. Indeed, they were ostentatiously set aside, as not necessary and impossible. Evil and error still reigned in the outer court. For three years and a half, that is, until the old dispensation was full and ended, and the new had got some little strength, this state of things would continue ; yet it would not last for ever.

A Church was to descend, and, happily, it has begun its career, though but a feeble one yet, whose court shall be formed in perfect harmony with the Holy Word, and with the divine commandments.

In this church there would be no divided Deity. The Father and the Son would be seen as absolutely one ; not one condemning, and the other pardoning and ultimately persuading the first to set aside his wrath and forgive the very same person whom before he deemed it right to condemn. But on the contrary, the one only wise God our Saviour, seeking to embrace all His children in love and prepare them for heaven ; but only admitting those who are prepared. His commandments surrounding His Church on every side. The mighty power of a true Church diffusing a sphere of life, love, and purity around, which will make the outer Court, as well as the inner sanctuary, pure.

No imputation can exist in this church of what is not a fact. Everything must be truthful, living, real. Instead of the Church being a centre of wrong, it is a centre of right, altogether pure and good ; it tolerates no make-believes nor falsehoods ; it serves one living Lord ; it reveres His laws of order ; it aims at

unfolding His wisdom and doing His will. A new church makes ultimately a new world. What the Church is, that the world will become. "The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," because the Church has become the church of Him, who is Lord and Christ, "and he shall reign for ever and ever. The throne of him who is God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

Oh may this tabernacle of our God speedily descend with power among men, and spread, until all falsity and wrong, all harshness and despotism, all corruption and sin, all ignorance and superstition shall for ever fade away, and reverent hearts, enlightened minds, and happy homes everywhere shall announce the universal reign of the Lord Jesus.

SERMON XXXIX.

THE HOLY OINTMENT.

"Moreover the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil-olive an hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil."—Exodus xxx. 22—25.

Pure interior, celestial love for the Lord, softening and sanctifying all the powers of the soul, is described by the Holy Ointment by which the sanctuary and all it contained were consecrated. The mode in which such heavenly love can be obtained is enjoined in the divine directions before us, and the importance of the lessons the Divine Word has here in store for us may be gathered from the emphatic manner in which the injunctions are given. No imitation of it was to be permitted. It was not to be employed in common use upon the flesh of man. It was not to be given to a stranger. It is called the Ointment of ointment: a holy anointing oil.

This Ointment was the universal requisite in all consecration. From the ark of the testimony to the laver and its base all things were to be anointed with it, including the sanctuary itself. Aaron and his sons were also to be anointed with this sacred substance to consecrate them for the priesthood. This was the universal sanctifier.

This indispensable means in the sanctification of all things of the sanctuary and the priesthood, can hardly fail to remind us that though religion is multiform, and has many agencies and many principles, yet one thing is essential to give purity, sanctity and life to them all: that one needful thing is Holy Love. This, then, is heaven's own ointment; the Ointment of ointment; the holy anointing oil; the consecrator of all things. Above all things, said the Apostle, put on Love.

The descent of this divine principle into the Humanity of the Saviour from the Divine Essence within Him, was called anointing

Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows.—Ps. xlv. 8, 9. Its reception by the individual Christian is receiving the oil of joy for mourning.—Isa. lxi. 3. Love is the inward essence of all that is good. “Love is the fulfilling of the law.”—Rom. xiii. 19.

But LOVE, the Christian principle, here represented by the Holy Ointment, is a very different thing from love, the human passion often expressed by the same word. The one is like the pure fire of the sun, which recreates, beautifies, strengthens, and spreads abundance where it shines; it diffuses blessing as an universal good. But the human passion is often a lurid fire, burning to seize and to possess, not for the good of the object loved, but for selfish pleasure only. This latter is an impure, blind, passionate, impulsive, short-lived thing, capable of being soon transformed into hate. But Christian love is serene, constant, elevating, unwearied, and intense; borrowed from His love, who descended to save, who lived on earth, and died and rose again to deliver, to win, and to purify the objects of His Divine affection.

How this pure love may be obtained is the subject of the Word before us. Let us carefully attend to the heaven-given lesson.

Do thou take to thyself chief spices. And then the specific fragrant things are named: the first of them is myrrh,—the best myrrh, or pure myrrh.

Truths, which are understood and delighted in, are like things fragrant, exquisitely charming to the spiritual sense. The Word, to the enlightened and loving Christian, is like a succession of paradises, full of odours; it is a glorious country of fields which Jehovah has blessed. And when, like Mary, he has got his alabaster box of spikenard, very precious, whose odour fills the house, he gives it all to Jesus from whom such odours come.

The best myrrh represented the chief truths of the letter of the Word. The leaves of the myrrh were valued in the East for many purposes, and amongst them for the preservation of the dead. Our Lord's body was anointed with myrrh and aloes.—John xix. 39, 40. Such preservation of the dead body was the figure of the conservation of everything good and true in the soul, until its resurrection, that is, its regeneration should take place. The wise men brought to the infant Saviour, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, when they came to worship Him; because in this significant act they acknowledged Him as the author of all celestial, spiritual, and literal blessings. The myrrh is the last named because it represented the literal truths of the Word.

The Lord's garments are said to smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia (Ps. xlix. 9), because He clothes Himself with divine truths as with garments, and these truths in their delightful character, and in their ascending order, are described as myrrh, aloes, and cassia.

Take to thyself the best myrrh, would therefore mean, make thyself familiar from affection with the truths of the Divine history, which unfold the tender mercy of the Lord. Dwell upon His loving kindness. Treasure up in thy mind every instance of Divine Patience, Benevolence, Care and Goodness, until thine eye shall glisten with gratitude, and thou shalt exultingly confess, that "the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

Take to thyself the best myrrh. Ponder over the fatherly care of the Almighty with Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob, with Israel in Egypt, with the Psalmist and the Prophets, but above all, meditate upon everything in the Saviour's history and learn of Him. Walk with Him while He heals the sick, feeds the poor, delivers the possessed, raises the dead, comforts the mourners, elevates the depressed, blesses all who will receive His mercy, and opens heaven to all believers; and thus you will find His divine footsteps so embalmed in a grateful memory, that the undoubting confession of your souls will be, "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. He forgiveth all thine iniquities; he healeth all thy diseases; he crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."—Ps. ciii. 12. These truths are, spiritually, the best myrrh.

The sweet-smelling cinnamon, and the sweet-smelling calamus, represent the spiritual sense of the Divine Word in relation to faith, and in relation to goodness. Cinnamon is the inner bark of the plant which produces it. It represents those inner truths, which are perceptible and delightful to faith. While the calamus, or sugar-cane, is the symbol of those truths which especially attract to goodness. Goodness gives sweetness to truth. A sweet disposition is gentle, tender, loving, and considerate. The Lord says to the fallen Church by the prophet, "Thou hast brought me no sweet cane for money; neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices: but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities."—Isa. xliii. 24. The sweet cane the Lord desires to be brought is the sweet spirit of modest gentleness, of unassuming goodness. The sweet desire to diffuse happiness, to promote peace, to take the bitterness from sorrow, and make sad hearts smile again, this is the sweet cane, the aromatic calamus, the Lord desires us to have.

What a blessing in a home is a young bright spirit full of tender affection! The aroma of such a soul disarms anger, softens grief, and spreads around a sphere of comfort, and of joy. The charm of such a spirit is the heavenly calamus, the guileless love of doing good.

Would you minister to souls diseased? would you bind up the wounds which have been made by falsity, envy, and hate? would you banish discord and cold from souls which have been torn and chilled by doubt, difficulty and dislike? Then be sure you take the cinnamon of inner genuine truth, and, above all, sweeten it with the genuine love of doing good. Never hope to sweeten others, until you have obtained from Him who can sweeten all, the spirit of mercy, of peace upon earth, and goodwill towards men.

The cassia, which was the next ingredient of the Holy Ointment, was a much more precious and costly substance than the others. We might gather this fact and its signification from its being mentioned last in order, both here, and in that remarkable declaration in the forty-fifth Psalm, about the Lord's garments. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia."—v. 18.

Cassia would seem to signify that inmost wisdom which springs from inmost love. The soul which feels the play of interior peace, the preference for interior goodness, perceives also in every part of the Divine Word, a supreme lesson of love. It extracts from every narrative and every part of the Holy Volume, an aura of the inner mind of the Most High. There is a hidden something that constrains such a soul to feel that love has framed the universe and every soul in it, and the laws of heaven are laws of love. The inner depths of the Holy Word have a play of heavenly fire, which does not burn, but fills the interior of the spirit with joy unspeakable, with serene and heart-felt peace. It is a fragrance full of heaven; celestial cassia. Like the hidden manna, it is only known by those who receive it.—Rev. iii. 17.

The man who feels interior peace,
Alone can know its worth:
From wisdom, love, and righteousness,
This peace derives its birth.

The weights mentioned in the text, and their proportions, are interesting to notice. The myrrh, the first mentioned, and the cassia, the last mentioned, were to be each five hundred shekels: while the cinnamon and the calamus would only make five hundred between them.

This order would seem to imply that religion is one in its highest sense, one also in its outward sense and outward practice; but in its intermediate operations, faith and love are presented distinctively, like the cinnamon and the calamus. A man may have an inward purpose to follow the Lord, but before he can carry that purpose out, he must define it to himself, and familiarize himself with its principles, and then come into the love of doing them. He must perceive their inner meaning and feel their sweetness. When to the first disposition there are added the other two, there is then the preparation made which leads to virtuous action. Such action corresponds to the inward purpose as nearly as the Christian's ability will permit. Thus it is as with the aromatics before us. Five hundred shekels weight of the cassia; five hundred of the myrrh; and of the cinnamon and the sweet calamus make five hundred between them. The number five hundred, seems to correspond to the extent of human ability. When our Lord speaks of the two classes of debtors to our Heavenly Father, he describes those whose frailties are light as owing fifty pence, while those who had fallen to the fullest extent as owing five hundred.—Luke vii. 41. When the Prophet saw the temple in vision, which represented the future Church of Christianity, he states it measured five hundred reeds on each side: which again would appear to be expressive of the full extent of human ability.

With this idea, then, we may understand the spices which were to be taken up to the weight of five hundred shekels, as expressive of a full reception of the three degrees of heavenly truth,—natural, spiritual, and celestial,—to the fullest extent of which man is capable: of each degree there must be five hundred.

But we must not forget the last portion of this important compound,—the oil-olive: for this represents the spirit of love itself.

The olive tree is regarded as the supreme of trees wherever it is cultivated. As it beautifies the sunny lands of the south of Europe and of Asia, its bright and lovely leaves as they glitter in the sun, suggest the idea of silver, while the oil whose excellent qualities are so highly and so universally esteemed may well be called golden.

The two holy affections of love to the Lord, and love to the neighbour, are represented in heaven, the Prophet Zechariah informs us, by "the two olive branches, which through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves."—Zech. iv. 12. The same two sacred loves were represented by similar imagery to

John, as described in the Revelations. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the whole earth." They are called the two witnesses, for they witness to the soul of God and heaven. Them no one can destroy without himself being destroyed.—xi. 4, 5. With these two holy affections it is ever so. He who hurts them injures himself; he who destroys them destroys himself.

The oil of which the Psalmist speaks is the same oil of heavenly love: "Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over."—xxiii. 5. "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever."—lii. 8.

The soothing influence of oil expresses the softening effects of love. All jarring discord fades away where this heavenly oil is freely used. The wheels of human life require often oiling to enable them to work freely and smoothly, without noise and without destruction. Oil is also a healer of human wounds, and in this respect also is the symbol of holy love. Nothing heals like kindness. Under the combined influence of time, that other servant of the Most High, and love, the soul of sympathy, how many broken spirits have been healed, learned to part company from dark despair and smile as in the days childhood.

Oil is the source of light. We all remember the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The foolish had lamps as well as the wise, but they had no oil in their vessels. The grace of holy love alone can keep the lamp of faith alive. Where love is waning light soon becomes dim; and when love utterly ceases the light ere long will be found to have gone out. So was it with the foolish virgins; so will it ever be.

And when we remember the theory, now perhaps scarcely to be called a theory, so certain does it seem that all the heat and light in earthy substances were in remote ages derived from the sun, and by a marvellous divine chemistry are stored up in the heat producing substances of nature, may we not also conclude that the oil of holy love in the human soul, is the wondrous adaptation and condensation by divine means unknown to us, of the love of God, the Sun of Righteousness?

O wondrous thought! God first by ways of mercy unutterable stores up His graces within us, and then dwells in His own virtues, and enables us to dwell in Him.

Another quality of oil is said to be that it imparts smoothness to troubled water, and thus greatly increases its transparency. Many interesting accounts have been given of articles lost in water at moderate depths becoming visible when oil has been

poured upon the surface, and thus enabled the previously invisible objects to come plainly into view.

It is certain that minds calmed by kindness can reveal stores of recollections long hidden from sight and believed to be lost. When the sinner's soul has been tranquillized by consolation, how often have the treasures of counsels long forgotten, of tender impressions received from kind parents, or in a Sunday school, believed to have been quite gone, been fully restored to view, and been powerful to reclaim, to comfort, and to bless. The hallowed influence of holy love can thus work wonders, not only in calming the storm of human passion, but in revealing to itself the remains of former instruction and happiness, bringing it to hopefulness, to effort, to faith, and reformation.

Well, then, may oil, especially olive-oil, be the symbol of heavenly love. Well may we understand that neither ark nor candlestick, neither table of shewbread nor altar of incense, neither laver, base, nor priest, nor the sanctuary itself could be consecrated to the service of the Lord, except by being touched with the holy anointing oil. Without love, both praise and prayer, both eloquence and zeal, both miraculous power, and faith itself, are all vain adornings of a soul dead at heart, and cold to things divine, as the icy glitter of a wintry day.

But when heavenly love and its appropriate truths are joined in the soul, a principle so holy is obtained that it sanctifies all the rest. This union is described very clearly in the Divine Word elsewhere. "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good."—Ps. lxxxv. 11, 12.

How plainly are we taught in this striking symbol of the Holy Ointment that the supreme affection which consecrates everything else in the soul must not be feeling alone, as that was not olive-oil alone. It must be love united to its appropriate truths, as the oil was united to its appropriate spices. Thus love becomes a true, genuine, and abiding principle, and is not merely an emotion. Religious feeling without its appropriate truths is superstitious, blind, easily excited to crime, and quite able to conjoin itself to any impurity of life. The world has always within it a large amount of religious earnestness and devotional feeling, but often fails in uniting with it the sacred truths which are represented by the myrrh, the cinnamon, the calamus, and the cassia. This must however be faithfully done if we would have our souls truly consecrated.

It is said, it must be done after the art of the apothecary, or

as it might be better rendered, the work of the ointment-dealer. The true ointment-dealer is the Lord. "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 anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see."—Rev. iii. 18.

From Him alone are all the sacred substances derived, of which the Holy Ointment is formed, and from Him the direction by which the union can be effected. When we daily read His Word, and pray earnestly and thoughtfully to Him, He will give us the spices of His truth, and in the particular circumstances of life direct our steps aright, and as we shun evil and do good in daily life, the blessed union of love and wisdom takes place within us. This is the art of the Divine ointment-dealer. "Thus shall we know there is balm in Gilead. There is a Physician there."—Jer. viii. 22.

The injunction that no one should make any imitation of the Ointment, teaches that in religion there should be no allowance given to self-derived fancy. What does the Lord teach, should be our sole enquiry. Give me thy holiness, O Lord, should be our only prayer. Teach me thy Word, O Heavenly Father, and give me grace to do it. Thus is the soul made heavenly, and filled with the glory of the Lord.

That this religious state should not be assumed for any selfish object, or from any principle separate from the church, is taught when it is said, "The ointment should not be poured upon man's flesh, nor given to a stranger. It is holy, and it shall be holy unto you."

May it be holy to each of us. May a settled purpose make the truths of the Holy Word sacred to us for the end for which they were given. They will then reveal their inherent fragrance, their holy power, and living efficacy. Let us look up for the Lord's blessing while we learn, and the Holy Oil will flow down, like that of the widow's cruse, and it will never stay, so long as we are willing to receive it. Thus shall we obtain the incomparable ointment that will soften and hallow our whole interior life, and fill us with the fragrance of heaven.

SERMON XL.

THE HOLY INCENSE.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbannum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each there shall be a like weight: and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee; it shall be unto you most holy, And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.”—Exodus xxx. 34—38.

Worship is spiritual incense, and in the divine command and directions before us, we have its true nature and composition fully laid open. There exists with many, the idea that worship in all cases is good, and if they can only get men to worship, whether by truths or candles, whether from genuine principles or from meretricious adornments, the work of religion is done. Whereas the truth is, that worship without principle, piety without charity and justice, devotion without integrity, is to be placed among the most subtle, the most dangerous, and the most extensively mischievous forms of wrong. When Israel despised the divine commandments, hear how the Lord described their worship, “When ye come to appear before me, who hath desired this at YOUR hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and the sabbaths: the calling of assemblies I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear, your hands are full of blood.”—Isa. i. 12—15.

The nations of Europe, and so far as we know, also of the whole world at the present day, who are most treacherous, most untruthful, most corrupt in every respect, and, of course, most backward in all that which tends to the progress of mankind, are those in which worship is cultivated without truth. The under-

standing, given to man to be a spiritual watchman, is lulled to sleep by the practice of blind devotion in gaudy ceremonies, mysterious and awful to the mind untaught in the Word of God. The soul, overcome by this spiritual parade, is then disposed to do the behests of the enchanters who preside over such rites ; while these latter gratified by the indulgence of their lust of dominion, are easily induced to overlook the vices of their devotees.

No greater curse can afflict a nation than a religion without enlightenment, and without virtue. Far better is it to have vice naked, than to have it covered in the garb of piety. Men repent readily of other sins, but those of hypocrisy are rarely overcome. Worship from pure hearts, and enlightened minds, is indeed as holy incense before the Lord, and before His angels ; but worship from mystery, mummery and selfishness, benumbs the conscience, intoxicates the judgment, and is like the fume of those dangerous drugs which paralyze the system. Such worship does not ascend to heaven. The lips may mutter, but the heart is far from God.

Let us, then, attend to the divine directions before us, that we may learn not only to worship, but that our prayers may be before the Lord as incense, and the lifting up of our hands, as the evening sacrifice.—Ps. cxliv. 2.

It will be well to notice that there are four spices mentioned in relation to the incense, as there were four spices named in the composition of the Holy Ointment. But the spices of the Incense, are not so costly as those of the Ointment. The Lord loves prayer well, but He loves practice better. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord," He says, "and do not the things that I say?" Worship is a means of heavenly excellence, but a holy life is heavenly excellence itself. Worship to many is a delightful thing in itself, a form of self indulgence. The prayers, the praises, the music, the majesty of the Divine Word, the eloquence of the preacher, form to numerous minds a real and intense attraction, and these may attend worship simply as one form of gratification ; but the practice of heavenly virtues until their opposites are slain often requires severe self-denial.

Worship, then, though an essential to a truly Christian life, and an indispensable means of spiritual improvement, is a *means* of grace only. Worship is not an end. Many have mistaken worship to be the great aim of religion, and would readily for its sake destroy charity, in refusing to pray with others of a different form of creed, or would readily neglect the duties of

life, to multiply the means of devotion. Yet, we may safely say that to do faithfully an unpleasant but necessary duty, is more pleasing to the Lord than to go and utter many prayers.

The devotion of mind and body to loving work, is higher worship than the devotion of the lips. To work is also to worship. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—1 Sam. xv. 22. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."—Mark ii. 27. Therefore, we should ever remember, when we go to worship we must have the desire to become better constantly in view. We are to pray that the Lord will give us power more faithfully to perform our duties, more thoroughly to overcome our evils, more fully to breathe daily in the atmosphere of heaven. In worship of this kind our prayer will ascend to the Lord, like fragrant incense in golden censers. St. John says, "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."—Rev. viii. 3, 4.

There are three classes of truths, bearing on worship, from which our worship should be formed. The first class consists of those truths which teach that we ought to worship: the second class, teaches that we should worship the Lord intelligently: the third class declares that we should worship from a spirit of love. These three are the spiritual stacte, onycha and galbanum. They are fragrant spices, when they are received with affection, and are delightful to the mind.

How tender, and how grand are those passages in the Psalms which invite us to adore the Lord, Our Heavenly Father. "O come let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms." "O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord Our Maker." "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts." "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." "Great and marvellous are thy works Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name for thou art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee: for thy judgments are made manifest."

Can anything be more truly fragrant, more truly as spice to the

affectionate soul, than truths and invitations such as these? They are the first of the fragrant things before us, the spiritual stacte.

But we must worship the Lord, not blindly, but intelligently. "Sing praises unto God, sing praises : sing praises unto our king, sing praises. For God is the King over all the earth ; sing ye praises with the understanding." "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me : let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy, yea, upon the harp will I praise, O God, my God." "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live : I will sing praise to my God, while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet : I will be glad in the Lord."

The worship of intelligence, of light, and meditation, is clear, bright and grand ; it is the beauty of holiness, it is the heavenly onycha.

Lastly, the Word teaches we must worship the Lord from love. The language of our worship must be, "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart ; in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous ; yea, our God is merciful ! The Lord preserveth the simple : I was brought low and he helped me. 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."

Such is the language of the third class of fragrant truths : of heavenly galbanum.

The frankincense, which formed the fourth spice, corresponded to the spiritual sense of the Word in general. This is a sort of universal incense which enters into all the rest. Hence, the three spices are first named and reckoned together and it is then said they should be joined with pure frankincense. The censer, too, derived its name in the original language, as also in Latin, and partly in our own, from the frankincense. When one term is used in the Word to denote interior truth in its most general form, it is this term frankincense which is used. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, in worship to the infant Saviour.

Of the converted nations it is written, "They shall bring gold, and incense : and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord."—Isa. lx. 6.

It is further said in our text, "Of each shall there be a like weight ;" or as in the original, "So much shall be in so much," meaning that the other spices and the frankincense should be equal to one another.

All truths should be in proportion and correspondence one with another. One fruitful source of error with many minds is undue devotion to one truth, to the undue diminution of others. All truths taken together are in proportion to each other, like the parts of the human form, and when the mind is perpetually taken up with some one, at the expense of the others, spiritual deformity and serious injury are the result. It is much to be feared that in many minds there has been a tendency to the truths of faith, to the neglect of the truths of love and of life. It is easy to believe, but hard to do.

True wisdom, however, always says, Let there be like weight, let there be due proportion. Think gratefully, lovingly, of what the Lord has done and is still doing for you ; but do not forget what He requires you to do for yourself. He who gave you a vineyard said, "Son, go to work to-day in my vineyard." He who gave you powers, requires you to use them. He who cast down the spirits of darkness, said, "Behold, I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Let all truths, then, be united in correspondence ; all duties be correspondingly regarded, then will the soul grow in order and in beauty. To each subject of thought and life there will be afforded due weight.

It is next written, "Thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary."

Here, as on a former occasion, we would remark the translation would be more exact if we read it, Thou shalt make it incense, ointment, after the work of an ointment dealer. The Lord alone is the Divine ointment dealer. Both the spices and the oil, and the directions how to compound them, are from Him. However we may seem, through the ministration of men and angels, to obtain internal blessings, in reality they have one only source, the Lord our Saviour. He only is holy, and from Him alone can be obtained the mercies which make us holy. "He appoints to them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning."—Isa. lxi. 3. He poured into His

own Humanity the oil of gladness, which raised it infinitely above its fellows ; and He alone can pour into ours the oil and the spices which will remove from us all the impurities of our old nature, and make us fair and pure, with the sweetness of the kingdom of heaven.

The Divine Word goes on to say, the incense must be "tempered together, pure and holy." The expressions, "tempered together," should be rendered "salted," and salt corresponds to the affection for truth. When our Lord said to His disciples, "Have salt in yourselves," He spoke according to such correspondence. The qualities of salt give us the reasons for its divine signification, as well as of many other directions in the Holy Word.

Salt preserves our food from corruption, so the affection for truth preserves our spiritual food,—our instruction in righteousness, from becoming dead in the soul. Salt unites oil and water together, and the result is a purifying soap. The affection for truth unites goodness and truth together, and the result is to remove impurities from the soul. Truth alone exposes evils, but cannot remove them. Goodness alone wishes to be right, but without truth does not know the way. Goodness and truth conjoined by affection makes a state of mind which removes faults, and is strengthened for all good, salted, pure, and holy.

Another quality of salt must not here be overlooked. It is destructive of worms, frogs, and other troublesome and loathsome creatures. When the soul is like a marshy land, low, selfish, and impure appetites, like worms infest it ; and if they are continued and confirmed, they become "the worms which never die ;" perpetual complaints and reasonings against divine truth and duty, are constantly heard like the croakings of frogs. But when a real affection for truth arises in the mind, and fires it with the love of all that is good and true, such vile and worthless defilers of the soul are dissipated and die away. Spiritual salt, then, is an essential of the soul that would make real progress in the regenerate life. Earnest, heavenly-minded men are the salt of the world. They preserve society from corruption and decay. "Ye," said the Lord to the disciples, "are the salt of the earth." And what such men are to the world, the affections they cherish are to themselves.

The spiritual meaning of salt was doubtless the reason why it was commanded that the meat-offering of cakes should be sprinkled with salt. "And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt, neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering:

with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."—Lev. ii. 13. For a similar reason when the prophet Elisha was called upon to heal the unhealthy waters near Jericho, he called for a cruise of salt, and cast the salt into the spring of the waters and said, "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters: there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land."—2 Kings ii. 21. Indeed, there is no real life in worship, no energy in goodness, no victory over evils, no certainty for heaven, except in proportion as we have a heartfelt affection for the truth. Those dull souls who go through the routine of worship, but whose eyes never brighten as truth is unfolded before them, who have eyes that see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that will not understand, may have a name that they live, but they are dead. Worship without truth is a leaden inanity, a smoke that creeps along the ground, a series of gesticulations such as an ape might offer, not the adoration of immortal minds. But on the other hand, worship with truth from souls earnest for right, alive to all the blessings they have received and daily receive from the King of heaven, worship from hearts glowing with heavenly fire, full of great thoughts, expanding as the truth expands grandly before them, magnifying the Lord, and losing themselves as it were in their adoration of Him; such worship is a glorious spectacle to heavenly beings as well as to men. If our spiritual sight were opened, we should behold united with such companies, multitudes of angels adoring with them. Of assemblies where such worshippers abound, it may again be said, "Ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."—Heb. xii. 22. And the love, wisdom, intelligence, the aspirations for the Lord, for His kingdom, His Word, and His peace, form an incense, grateful at once, both to earth and to heaven. Let, then, our incense be salted, pure, and holy. Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

It is commanded also that the incense be bruised. "Thou shalt beat of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee. It shall be unto you most holy."

Where the mind is not much concerned about religion, it regards it only in the most general form. It does not dwell upon it, and particularize it. To perceive the beauty, and feel the spirit of religion and of worship we must meditate upon it. We must, as it were, take it in detail, and make it our own, little by little. The inefficiency of the religion of many, is much owing

to the want of this habit of regarding truth and goodness in every particular. We know that food not masticated, and imperfectly digested, would yield little nourishment or strength to the body. It needs to be bruised, to be beaten into very small pieces. So must it be with everything in religion. It is not enough for a person to acknowledge himself a sinner. Many do this without at all thinking of any sin which they commit. Many acknowledge the importance of doing good, but never propose to themselves any particular good. Many give thanks to the Lord for His mercies towards them, but never reflect upon the gifts of health and comfort, of talent and faculty, of body and soul, and earth and heaven, they constantly enjoy. Nothing would more powerfully dispel the spirit of complaint, and excite in the heart a devout sense of gratitude for the Divine Mercy than this duty of beating the incense very small.

The manna of the Israelites was to be ground and bruised before it was baked into cakes. The disciples knew the Lord in the breaking of the bread. If any one will try to understand his blessings in detail ; take stock, as it were, of the countless things of the body which he enjoys, and the value of which he may learn from their loss in others ; if he will note well those powers and possessions of the mind which he uses every day, and which when lost leave the unhappy sufferer a wreck, beyond all other forms of ruin : if he will look around on the benefits he partakes from the Divine bounty, in common with all ; on the sun, the moon, the stars, the air, on all the lovely things in this beautiful world ; and then, look inward and upward, to the world of all celestial glories, and meditate on the blessings inestimable and unutterable stored up for him there, his heart would often melt in love and adoration.

Did we the sighs we vainly spend,
To heaven in supplications send ;
Our cheerful songs would oftener be,
Hear what the Lord hath done for me.

The injunction to the Israelites not to make the perfume for themselves, or to attempt to imitate it, forbids all worship from self, and all hypocritical worship.

And, surely, when the Lord Himself has taught us how to worship him aright, it does seem extraordinary that men are so blind as to invent other forms of worship than those of adoring love, faith and obedience. "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee," is the language of our Heavenly Father Himself, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?

SERMON XLI.

THE GARMENTS OF AARON.

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office."—Exodus xxviii. 2, 3.

There are three characters which are leading ones amongst those which represent the Lord :—the Law-giver, the King, and the Priest. The most distinguished representative of the Lord as Law-giver was Moses ; as King was David ; and as Priest was Aaron. The Lord Jesus, as Jehovah in the flesh, was all in all ; Law-giver, King, and Priest. It is in this latter capacity that we would consider His divine character now, as it was represented in the Jewish dispensation by the high priest, and especially by Aaron, and by the garments which he was divinely appointed to wear.

That the Lord Jesus is a priest, and that He was represented by Aaron is clearly recognized in the writings of the Apostles. Thus in the epistle to the Hebrews, "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, to-day have I begotten thee." As he saith also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."—v. 5, 6. Again, "By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's ; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Many more passages occur to the same

effect, but these are sufficient to show that the Apostle recognized the truth that the Lord Jesus not only was, but is, a High Priest in His glorified Humanity, though higher than the heavens.

The essence of the priestly character is a love for the eternal happiness of men. Every true priest yearns to promote the salvation of all around him. The Lord having this love infinitely, is an Infinite High Priest. His love ever pleads for them, just as a mother's love pleads for her children ; pleads for their happiness ; and if they have fallen into sin, pleads for their restoration.

This divine love induced the Lord to assume the human nature to reconcile and re-unite man to Himself : filled His Humanity with a burning desire to save the human race, and as that salvation could only be accomplished by suffering and victory, by complete glorification and full union with the Father, hence He is said to be a High Priest who offered up Himself, and thence made Himself a new and living way, by which His Holy Spirit like divine blood could descend to purify and renew human souls, and thus impart to them eternal life. "Christ being come, a high priest of good things, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."—Heb. ix. 11, 14.

The Lord Jesus in His Humanity, especially as to His Divine Love yearning for the salvation of the human race is the HIGH PRIEST yearning for His full union with the Father ; and then, and now, yearning for the regeneration and happiness of all His immortal children. Before His full glorification He interceded for full union with the Father that mankind might be saved. Since His full glorification His Spirit intercedes in us, suggesting our prayers, and helping our infirmities. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii. 26.

The Divine Love, then, embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ, is the High Priest represented by Aaron. That love incessantly

pleads for all His children. When truth would condemn, and say of sinful man, like the dresser of the vineyard of the profitless tree, "cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground," the Divine Love in accents of mercy ever seeks to arrest the fall and says, "Let it alone this year, and I will dig about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down."—Luke xiii. 7, 8.

This Divine Love, then, as presented in the Glorified Humanity of the Lord Jesus was represented by the High Priest Aaron. This Divine Love is the High Priest of the universe. It provides for, and yearns for the salvation of all human beings, and when they become reformed and regenerated rejoices over them, and rejoices in them with ineffable blessing, and unspeakable peace. But it is not so much with the character of the Lord as High Priest that we have at present to do as with the representation of the Garments of the High Priest. They are so particularly described that the thoughtful mind which has a worthy idea of the Word of God will easily be led to conceive that some important truths are intended to be conveyed by descriptions so elaborate and exact.

The Word of God would hardly be so much taken up with information about these garments, unless they had some lesson of heavenly wisdom to place before us. The whole Jewish law, as the Apostles stated, was a shadow of good things to come, and certainly, the High Priest, its central object, in his divinely appointed robes, must be regarded as bearing an especial part in this representation of divine and spiritual things, by natural objects.

The High Priest himself, we have seen, was the representative of the Lord Jesus, our Divine High Priest, especially as to His Divine Love. The Garments which clothed the High Priest, will represent the wisdom which clothes the Divine Love, and which in its several degrees reveals and manifests the Divine Love to angels and to men.

How grand is that invocation where the Psalmist says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain."—Ps. civ. 1, 2. Indeed, what is all creation both visible and invisible, both in the spiritual and the material universe, but the gorgeous robes which clothe Eternal Love. The inner heavens vast beyond human thought, the outer sky blazing with innumerable suns are but the glorious dress,

the spheres of inner and outer grandeur which surround the Almighty One.

Even the Church in the world, the Lord's heaven and earth among men, is His outer robe, changing as each dispensation changes, and altering its modes as the change of states among men require. It is the outer clothing of Infinite Wisdom. That Wisdom endures though human forms and systems pass away. Old moral creations perish and new ones come, but the Divine Word which is their source endures. The most ancient church passed and was succeeded by the ancient. This faded away and was followed by the patriarchal and Jewish. Then came the first Christian heaven and earth, and now this is gradually fading away, and the New Jerusalem is tinging the horizon with rays of coming splendour. We see a new heaven and a new earth, and the former heaven and the former earth are passing away, yet the same glorious Lord remains, and will for ever remain, the Eternal Source of all that is good. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

Let us, then, consider the Garments of the High Priest as representing the clothings of Divine Love, or, in other words, the Wisdom of the Lord as adapted to angels in heaven, and to men upon earth; and I trust we shall be enabled to perceive how truly they may be called "holy garments for Aaron, for glory, and for beauty."—2.

First, let us notice the materials of which the Garments were made. Gold, and fine twined linen, of the colours of blue, purple, and scarlet. Gold seems to have been a sort of governing material, introduced as the leading object in every portion. Hence we read, "And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires, to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen with cunning work."—Ex. xxxix. 3. Gold, corresponding as we know to celestial love, was thus made a sort of universal thread reigning everywhere in the High Priest's dress, to teach us that the grand element in every spiritual possession is the spirit of love. All angelic excellencies are blessed, because they flow from love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love,"

said the Apostle, "I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."—1 Cor. xii. 1. Angelic faces are the forms of love, angelic voices are the sounds of love, angelic talents are the glorious powers of love. So must it be with Christian men. Faith is only valuable as it is grounded in love. Works to be saving must be the operations of the spirit of Christian love within. Without this they lack the true heavenly tinge, and can neither save nor bless. This then was the reason why everywhere in the garments of the High Priest was to appear the thread of gold, and thus the lesson was given in symbol which was afterwards given by our Lord in precept, "I counsel thee to buy of me, fine gold."—Rev. iii. 18.

The fine linen twined represented spiritual truths seen, and blended into a true system of heavenly order. "The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."—Rev. xix. 8. The colour blue, represents the deep spiritual nature of divine truth, like the exalted blue of the upper sky, while the purple and scarlet, one a deep and the other a bright shade of red, represent the two grand shades of all truth derived from heavenly fire, namely love to the Lord above all things, which was represented by the purple, and love to our neighbour, of which the scarlet was the symbol. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—Matt. xxii. 40.

These then were the universal materials out of which all heavenly garments, and indeed all heaven itself was to be composed—celestial love, and the truths of love, to the Lord, and charity to our neighbour, intelligently received and woven together by those who are wise in heart. Hence, it is written, "And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he minister unto me in the priest's office."—3.

The next point to be noticed is, that there were three garments one under the other: the brodered coat, the inmost robe; the robe of blue, the middle; and the ephod, the outermost garment. There was also an inner belt or girdle for the inner coat, (4, & Ex. xxxix. 29,) and a girdle, called a curious girdle, for the ephod.—8.

The brodered coat which formed the inner garment of the High Priest will remind us of the seamless coat which formed the inner garment of our Lord, and both represent to us the inner harmony of Divine Truth, such as it is in its inmost character. It is said to be brodered, chequered or plaided, to

represent that it is love and wisdom in combination. As the heat and the light of the sun of nature flow out as one, inseparable, so divine love and wisdom flow from the Lord, and are received by His true servants, blended together; the love is wise, and the wisdom is loving. It is an inward embroidered coat. It is as a holy glow within the soul, of love and wisdom.

The next garment was a robe, a middle garment, to represent Divine Truth when it is intellectually seen as a system by the rational faculty, Divine Truth when it is apprehended in application to our motives and ends is an inner coat; when it is rationally and philosophically conceived, it is a middle robe, and when it is brought out into a virtuous and benevolent life is the outer robe or ephod, to which we would now invite your attention; and all these spheres of truth are the Garments of salvation; of which the soul is instructed by the Prophet to say, "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."—Isai. lxi. 10.

The ephod or outward garment of the High Priest, represented religion in life and practice.

The ephod had in it all the constituents of the rest of the dress. It is written, "And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen." It was to be a permanent symbol of the truth. "All religion has relation to life." It was fastened at the shoulders by two onyx stones, set in ouches, or settings of gold, in which were engraved the names of all the tribes of Israel: six on one side, and six on the other, for stones of memorial before the Lord. From these stones also proceeded two chains of wreathen work to the Breastplate which the High Priest had on, when he went to worship before the Lord; and which also contained the precious stones covering the names of the twelve tribes.

Lastly, at the hem of the robe of the ephod there were embroidered figures of the pomegranate, each containing a little golden bell, so that the ephod was bordered by these tassels, of a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all round. In all these particulars there are shadowed forth most interesting characteristics of spiritual life.

The onyx stones on the shoulders, with the names of the twelve tribes, for a memorial before the Lord, represented the inner memory, with all the truths of religion impressed there; and forming the spring of power and energy in life.

The shoulders are the centres from which the arms and hands

act. When anyone gives his whole energy to a cause, he is said to put his shoulder to the wheel. The good shepherd who found his lost sheep, laid it on his shoulders, and went away rejoicing.—Luke xv. 5.

The ephod then united over the shoulders by the onyx stones set in gold, with the names of the twelve tribes engraved under them, was a symbol of all the principles of religion, embraced in the very life and purpose of man, and determined to action with all his energy. When religion is thus engraven upon the affections, and constitutes the inner life of man, it pervades his whole character. It is the law put into their inward parts, and written in their hearts.—Jer. xxxi. 33. Being rooted within, it gathers the whole force of their inner life and causes their light “so to shine before men that they see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.”

From the same ouches of gold on the shoulders came the chains of wreathen gold to which the Breastplate was suspended, which was the symbol of religion in worship; but our remarks upon that beautiful and important portion of the High Priest's dress must be reserved for our next discourse.

We cannot, however, pass over the embroidered pomegranates, and the bells of gold, hanging in each, forming the tassel-work of the hem of the lower border of the robe of the ephod.

The pomegranate is a fruit the size of an orange, and full of seeds, which are nutritious and pleasant to eat. They correspond to religion in daily acts. A life, whose minute deeds are all the fruit of Christian thought and feeling; in which virtue and gentleness are combined in all its ways and works, is surrounded by a moral robe whose hem exhibits these spiritual pomegranates. The bells of gold represent their words of love. The truth spoken in love is like a little golden bell, and fraught with pleasant sounds, leaving only pleasant memories.

Such are the lessons taught by the High Priest's dress. The beautiful robes and their arrangement represented the holy states of the angels who form the heavens which the Divine Love fills and blesses, and which to Him are magnificent garments. Such, too, must be the states of men who live for heaven. They, too, must not forget the inner belt and the outer girdle, for these represent that firmness of purpose, first to receive religion within, and then to carry it firmly into life; without which there is no real consistent Christianity.

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning,” was the injunction of our Lord to His disciples; and the same lesson

was represented by the inner and outer belts of the sacred dress.

There must be concentrated energy in receiving divine things. No feeble grasp should be used in prayer, or in the inner work of the soul as it lays hold on eternal life. We must be girded within; nor must we act with a faltering hesitating hand in doing the Lord's will. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," is a maxim never to be forgotten by those who seek to do the Lord's work, and to leave the world better than they found it. Hence they will need two belts, one within, and one around; and being firmly girded by both, will acquire true force and consistency of character.

Lastly, there was the mitre of the High Priest made of the same materials as the rest of the dress, and having a plate of gold on the front with the inscription upon it, "Holiness to the Lord." The mitre represents a perception on the part of the wearer that the Lord is the source of all good, an acknowledgement that every virtue in heaven and earth, that every pure thought and hallowed disposition is from the Lord alone. "Holiness to the Lord." In the highest heavens the inmost affections of the angels are incessantly saying like the four living ones in the midst of the throne, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come." And upon the mitre of every one who wishes to be as the angels, will be this confession, from the inmost love of their hearts, like letters of light, on a plate of gold, "Holiness to the Lord."

SERMON XLII.

THE BREASTPLATE OF PRECIOUS STONES.

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."—Exodus xxviii. 29, 30.

In the course of the chapter before us there are three portions, which in their general bearings, and in their spiritual meaning, seem at first consideration to be very much alike. These are, the general description of the garments, the account of the ephod with the names of the twelve tribes on the shoulder stones; and thirdly, the breastplate with the names of the twelve tribes again, under the twelve precious stones.

Since general principles are very simple in themselves, but extremely numerous and varied in their applications, it not unfrequently happens, that many objects mentioned in the Word seem to have the same signification. This arises, however, from no tautology or repetition in the Word, but from the same general principles being applied in some new form, or in some new department of life. Justice and judgment are universal principles which should pervade the whole of life, but in how many varied forms they appear! Justice and judgment in our personal characters are in one form, in our domestic circles in another, in our business life in another; and in our worship in another. Yet are they justice and judgment in all.

It is the same in nature. The twofold arrangement pervades the human body. In the head, it exists in the two departments of the brain; in the chest it is visible in there being heart and lungs; in the rest of the body as right and left in everything. The same twofold arrangement exists in sex everywhere. All

things in the universe have relation to goodness and truth, yet in what an infinitude of varied forms does that relation manifest itself!

When, therefore, we see in the Word what occasionally appears as repetition, we must not conclude, that it is really so, but that the application of the same great principles in some new degree of the soul, or some new department of life, or new spheres of operation, is being brought definitely before us.

Thus, in the case now under consideration, we have the general description of the garments which represent the principles of religion, the description of the ephod, and the names of the tribes on the onyx stones, commanded to be placed on the shoulders, which describe the principles of religion as they exist in the inner memory before the Lord, and as the springs of real life; and lastly, the Breastplate with the same twelve names under the precious stones, which describe the principles of religion as they exist in worship. "They shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord."—30.

When we remember that precious stones represent precious truths, we shall see that the general lesson afforded by a contemplation of this Breastplate of precious stones, is, that we ought to worship the Lord from an intelligent and enlightened state of mind. On the heart, should be precious stones, covering the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Lord desires that the mind should be illuminated by truths, as well as the heart be warmed by love, when we appear before Him.

That precious stones represent truths, seen in clearness, is manifest from many portions of the Divine Word. Thus, it is said in Isaiah, of the Lord's Church, "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."—liv. 11—13. Our Lord speaks in the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven being "like unto a merchantman 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. Evidently goodly pearls mean goodly truths; and the pearl of great price the true doctrine of the Lord. In the Book of Revelation, the Lord says, also, that "to him that overcometh he will give a white stone, and in the stone a new name, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."—ii. 17. The white

stone, can be no other than the inward assurance which tells us of victory and peace, and imparts a new, heavenly quality known only to ourselves, and to the Divine Giver. The gates of the New Jerusalem are said to consist of twelve pearls, (Rev. xxi. 21,) and her foundations of twelve precious stones, (19); where, as here, by the twelve jewels of the Breastplate, all the truths of the Church are represented.

The lesson, that we should worship our Heavenly Father, not in blindness, but in states of enlightened truth, glowing with heavenly love, is one of unspeakable importance. How devout, yet how dark, are the millions who crowd the churches in many lands! There is an earnest groping for God, yet for want of truth, there is neither progress nor peace. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." But they who grope in darkness are weak, and stumble. They are alarmed at shadows. "The blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch. When we see the blind, but zealous devotion of minds shrouded in superstition, earnest, but dark, how does the heart long to say, "Arise, shine for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Worship without truth, is crouching, unintelligent, and unprogressive. It is truth united to adoration which gives courage, strength, purity, humility, order, and beauty in divine things. Hence we are to worship God in spirit and in truth.—John iv. 24. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name. For the Lord is good: his mercy is everlasting, and his TRUTH endureth to all generations."

This lesson was taught, in the magnificent symbol of the Breastplate of precious stones being borne on the heart of the High Priest, when He went in to worship the Lord of Hosts.

The Breastplate was to be suspended by two chains of pure gold coming from the golden ouches, or sockets, in which the onyx stones of the shoulders were. This was a beautiful representation of the fact that work and worship should be united together. The same portions—the shoulders, from which power went forth to the hands, were also the points from which the golden chains went forth to support the Breastplate. He who is the most zealous worker, should also be the most zealous worshipper. The two things in order are connected by golden chains, or in other words, by loving affections, seeking strength and blessing from Him, from whom all power and peace descend,

The Breastplate, indeed, was not a plate, but an embroidered cloth, ten inches square, doubled, and formed of the same material as the ephod. "And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it."—Ex. xxviii. 15.

Hence we learn, that as we obtain the heavenly virtues, which are meant by the gold, and fine twined linen, the blue, the purple, and the scarlet, so will our worship consist of the same things. What a man is in his essential character, that he is on Sunday in his worship, as well as on week-days in worldly affairs, or in his workshop. Only when his life consists of the gold of Christian love, and the purple and scarlet of Christian wisdom, both in relation to God and man, will his worship of the Lord be seen to proceed from the same pure ground, and he be enabled to realize the great blessing pronounced by the Lord, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

The stones were to be each set in gold, with the name of a tribe under each stone, and then fixed each one in its place, with little chains from one to the other. It is said to be done with cunning work, but it would be better rendered, by the work of an embroiderer. The intention of the Divine Word is, doubtless, to teach us, that in the acquisition of Christian graces we must intelligently co-operate with the Lord. He gives the materials, the skill, and the strength, but we must use them. The intellect is a spiritual embroiderer. It is skilfully and busily arranging the secret tissues of our inner being, and making the character beautiful or otherwise. Happy is it when it is covering the affections by a tissue of blessed principles, all infixed in the golden settings of heavenly goodness. Thrice happy is he, who, when he appears before the Lord, appears with an orderly arrangement of heavenly truths, like the jewels of the Breastplate, and all embedded in the golden affections of a devoted heart; "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

The order of the stones is an interesting subject of contemplation. The order of the names of the tribes is not given, but is probably that of the arrangement for encampment given in Num. ii. beginning with Judah.

The order of the stones is exactly given, and that will amply serve for the purposes of our discourse. We must regard that order from right to left. There were six stones on the right side and six stones on the left. Thus, two threes on each side, numbering from the top to the bottom stone.

Thus the first row on the right, reckoning from the top downwards, consisted of a ruby, a topaz, and a carbuncle. The first stone is called a sardius in the ordinary English Bible, but it ought to be rendered ruby; the word indeed signifies redness, and is now well known to mean the ruby.

The second row consisted of a chrysopterus, a sapphire and a diamond.

The first three stones derive their peculiar lustre from their warm red glow. The second three take a warm blue shade, down to the bluish white dazzle of the diamond.

These two rows on the right side, represented the thoughts on divine things, of those Christians who may be called, men of love, —right hand Christians. Their thoughts respecting the Lord and their neighbour are all grounded in love. They delight to think that the Lord is Love Itself: that His wisdom is the wisdom of Love: that His works are the works of love. They regard their neighbour also from the same ground. The warm blue of the second row of stones denotes the depth of their thought; the diamond, its clearness. They are greatly intelligent, but they value intelligence least of all. It is goodness they prize. Hence, the diamond was the last of their second row.

These are they whom the Lord describes as being on His right hand in heaven, (Matt. xx. 23,) and hence, their state as to perception of divine things is described by the stones on the right side of the Breastplate.

The third row consisted of a ligure, (or, lapis lazuli,) an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, of a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

These two rows, of far less valuable stones than the former, represent the same truths as before, but as they are apprehended by men, who are Christians more of the head and of faith, than of the heart and love. These regard the Lord and their neighbour: they revere the one, and cherish the other, but neither with that warmth, nor that depth, which is experienced by the men of love. They are those whom the Lord describes as sitting on the left hand in heaven. They commence with a blue stone, which is not transparent, and end with the pale jasper, clear like crystal, but not sparkling like the diamond: men rather of thought than of love. They have not the burning glow of celestial feeling, but still they are within the kingdom of the Lord. They are borne on His breast, and they bear on their breasts the precious stones, if not of the highest, yet of an order far superior to self and the world, and they are not forgotten in the day when the Lord makes up His jewels.—Mal. iii. 17.

All these stones may also be regarded in relation to one mind, and then can be conceived as thoughts of love, and thoughts of faith; as the heart-side and the intellectual-side of the same person. And they only, who are thus equipped with truths of every kind, are thoroughly furnished for every good work. They are diligent to know, skilful to divine, and large-hearted to glow with the riches of celestial feeling. They are "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." The little chains of golden cord which went from one of the stones to another, the chains of gold connecting the Breastplate to the shoulders, and the two golden rings by which it was attached to the girdle of the ephod, represented the union of all heavenly things by love. The same love which forms the very essence of heaven, runs through and unites all things in harmony and connection, and surrounds them with a blessed sphere. It is this embosoming of all things in love, which was represented by the chains and rings of gold, connecting the Breastplate above and below, and connecting also every part with every other. "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." "Jerusalem is builded as a city which is compacted together." These form the very law of heaven, and of all things heavenly. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."—1 John iv. 16. This love, however, is everywhere, in all things, and in perfect harmony with spiritual truth. It is not sentimentalism, or blind feeling; but the love, whose companion is high principle, whose views are pure, peaceable, and divinely-wise, full of mercy, and of good fruits.

Let us next notice the mode and the order in which the Garments of the High Priest were put on. They are described in Leviticus. This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done. "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it upon him therewith. And he put the breastplate upon him; also, he put in the breastplate, the Urim, and the Thummim. And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon the forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses."—viii. 5—9.

The Urim and the Thummim, or flames and perfections, which the words signify in Hebrew, mean the precious stones themselves, which were placed in their positions every time the

Breastplate was used : those of a warm brilliancy being understood by the flames (Urim), and the rest by the perfections (Thummim).

The spiritual order here indicated, is the order ever intimated in the whole Word. First, wash, then be clothed with beauty. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well." "If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me." "I will wash mine hands in innocency ; so will I compass thine altar, O God." How humbling, and how purifying an effect would it have upon us, if we ever remembered the washing, which must precede the adornment of our souls with heavenly beauty, not only the first time, but every time we come into holy states ; and thus put on our holy garments and the Breastplate before the Lord. There is, then, first the inner coat put on and girded with the inner girdle. The garments of praise are received, instead of the spirit of heaviness. The inner purity of spiritual religion clothes the soul with holy thoughts, and girds them with heavenly strength, grasping them with the spirit of sacred zeal.

There is next put on the blue robe. Devout meditation brings the mind into a clear perception of heavenly truth, and into the very element of the spiritual sense of the Holy Word. He breathes the atmosphere of angelic thought.

Then "he put on him the ephod, and he girded him with the girdle of the ephod, and girt it to him with it."

As the soul proceeds in the attainment of heavenly graces, it proceeds to complete its internal states, by external ones ; that religion may be with it in fulness. It says with the Psalmist, "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart : I have declared Thy faithfulness and thy salvation. I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation." And, lastly, he places upon him the Breastplate, and inserts therein the precious stones, the Urim and the Thummin, each in its place. The truths which shew him the love, the wisdom, and the omnipotence of the Lord, and the affection, the wisdom and virtue of man, when he is in the image and likeness of the Lord, all these like jewels are resplendent within, shining with holy lustre, and leading the soul in fullest and deepest adoration to say, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good ; for his mercy endureth for ever."

But we must not forget, that the Breastplate was not a thing of beauty only : it was a Breastplate of judgment. By its means the Divine Will was made known, in all times of difficulty and

perplexity. The High Priest, with this Breastplate on, laid his own enquiries, and his own sorrows, or those of the people, before the Lord, in the Holy of holies; and received from Him infallible direction. The Divine Light shone upon the precious jewels, and conveyed the instruction of heaven, and its sanction as the case might be. "And, thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment, the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart, before the Lord continually."

How pregnant is this divine lesson with wisdom for us. We have our difficulties and perplexities from time to time. The Lord has vouchsafed also the Breastplate of heavenly judgment. Let us have the goodly pearls of holy principles written upon our hearts, and desire only to be led of the Lord, and then go confidently in, and lay our cares and our difficulties before Him; and He will meet with us, illuminate us, and bless us.

Let us, then, diligently make our heavenly garments, and form the heavenly Breastplate. They will not make themselves. The wise-hearted are commanded to make them. They are the work of the embroiderer. The Lord provides the gold, and the fine linen; the blue, the purple and the scarlet; but the true servants of the Lord must weave them, and form them into spiritual robes, and put them on. When this is done, they will stand in glory and in beauty: and they will obtain answers of peace.

The Divine High Priest has done all this before us, by His own might, for the whole universe; and to give us power to follow Him in the regeneration. Let us follow His divine example, by daily power from Him, and realize His blessed words, "Where I am, there shall my servant be."

SERMON XLIII.

THE ATONEMENT MONEY—THE RANSOM FOR SIN.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) a half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls."—Exodus xxx. 11—16.

The scriptural description of the Atonement, is that of God's winning man to Himself, by His mercy, His Wisdom, and His Love.

The foundation thought of all religion according to the Word of God, is, that our Heavenly Father is infinitely, unchangeably good: "good to all, and his tender mercies over all his works."
—Ps. cxiv. 9.

His delight is to make man happy; but happiness can only be obtained in goodness, in wisdom, in virtue, and in union with the Lord Jesus Christ; hence, He requires repentance, faith, worship, and affection towards Himself for man's sake. He never changes, (Mal. iii. 9, James i. 17,) and needs not change, for he cannot become better, and he will not become worse. All the change, therefore, included in the Atonement, is a change of man. There is no change in God. Man is to be won by God's love, as manifested in the Lord Jesus; by God's wisdom teaching Him in His Word; and by God's power redeeming and regenerating him. Thus man is reconciled to God; and He receives the Atonement.—Rom. v. 11, 2 Cor. v. 19.

Change of mind, change of life, change of heart: these are what are required to make man happy here, and blessed hereafter. "He hath showed 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 thy God."—Micah. vi. 8.

Such is not only the marked and general teaching of the

Sacred Scriptures : it is the universal teaching. There is no single text or statement in the divine writings, where the Atonement is described as pacifying God, or the wrath of God : it is in every instance, in the Old Testament, as in the New, represented as cleansing, purifying, reconciling man. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."—Titus ii. 14.

No words can express the importance of this view of the great work of the reconciliation of man to God, as the only means of true happiness on earth and in heaven. Religion, too often, at present, has an extremely feeble influence in the improvement of mankind, because it has been perverted into efforts for changing God, and making Him propitious, who is never otherwise ; while the inner changes which can alone banish sorrow from hearts and homes, and bring peace and joy, are overlooked and neglected. Hence, the world groans in misery ! Hence, we see homes so unhappy, from the wearing anxieties and petty miseries of daily life. Social frauds and other crimes are as numerous, public dishonesty, and armed violence, as prevalent in Protestant as in Romish lands, and both have scarcely any marked superiority over cultivated, but non-scriptural countries. The reason is, that we have made the commandments of God of none effect by our traditions. The eternal truth, "Ye must be born again" is passed over, and we are earnest and busy about ceremonies and services by which we wish to induce God to give us blessedness and peace, instead of seeking by prayer and practice that entire change of character, by which the Lord can bless us here, and raise us to everlasting happiness in heaven.

There is a great variety of things mentioned in Scripture by which Atonement is spoken of as being effected, here it is by ten small pieces of silver.—13. "A half-shekel shall be the offering of the Lord." "A shekel is twenty gerahs." This was to be called the Atonement-money of the children of Israel, and was to be used for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. It was to make an Atonement for their souls.—16.

We have mentioned that Atonement in the Scriptures is always described as affecting and changing man. We wish to see this in perfect clearness, for it is of great importance.

In the New Testament the word Atonement only occurs once, and then it is said, "We have received the atonement."—Rom. v. 11. But reconciliation occurs oftener, and is the translation of the same word in the original. Reconciliation,

however, is always represented as affecting us. It is not the reconciliation of God to man, but the reconciliation of man to God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. v. 19. "Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ."—2 Cor. v. 18. "That he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Eph. ii. 16. "By him to reconcile all things unto himself: by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And, you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."—Col. i. 20, 21. We thus see constantly, the same truth stated, God the All-Good, lovingly reconciling and uniting man to Himself. It is the same lesson which is always taught, even when very different forms of speech are adopted. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the SINS OF THE WORLD."—John i. 29. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."—Matt. i. 21. "Unto him that loved us, and WASHED US from our sins, in his own blood."—Rev. i. 5. "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission (the removal) of sins."—Matt. xxvi. 28.

The word Atonement is used oftener in the Old Testament than in the New, but is always accompanied by similar language shewing that it was intended to represent that change of mind and heart, without which happiness and heaven are impossible.

Thus, in the first chapter in which the word Atonement occurs in the Old Testament, we read, "And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin-offering, for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it, and it shall be an altar most holy."—Ex. xxix. 36, 37. "And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."—xliv. 45. Thus we have the same divine teaching; man is to be purified, and then the Lord can dwell with him. So on the great annual day of the Atonement it is said, "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins, before the Lord."—Lev. xvi. 30.

This lesson is indeed the lesson of lessons, for all to learn. To become, by power from the Lord, wise, victorious over our evil passions and propensities; and thus, pure, orderly, loving, and good: this is the path, the only path, which leads to life.

The cultivator of the earth assumes that a beneficent Providence will ensure the sun rising at his appointed time ; the rains will duly fall ; and a pure atmosphere will afford the sweet influences by which flower and fruit will ripen ; if only he be diligent, intelligent, and persevering. If he were to neglect his work, and neither dig nor plough, neither sow nor weed, but betake himself to praying that God's part might be done, while he neglected his own, how surely would the land be cursed with barrenness. The cause would be not a curse from God, but a curse from his own folly.

Yet, in religion, this is far too generally done. The ground of the human soul, as to its greater part, is infested with the rank weeds of ignorance and superstition. Follies of a thousand kinds swarm in the mind : wild, howling passions, like fearful beasts prowl in the jungles of the mental wilderness, and pain and misery are the sad result. Instead of the ploughshare of the gospel being driven through these, and tares so fearful being rooted out ; instead of the wild beasts of selfishness, envy, and hate, with their horrid broods of malignant feeling, being encountered and overcome within us, we are too often found bemoaning our griefs, but neglecting the only real work by which this wilderness can be turned into Eden ; this desert into the garden of the Lord. "Let us work while it is day." Let us tread on the lion and the asp, the young lion and the dragon, and in the power of the Lord Jesus, they will sink and die. Soft and gentle feelings and sentiments, like lambs, sheep, and doves, will occupy the heart and mind, and soon we shall hear our Heavenly Father whispering the encouragements of His goodness, and saying, "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 upon me, and I will answer him : I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honour him ; with long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

O that these divine words would sink deeply into all hearts, and rouse them, from youth onwards, to the only Christian mode by which progress, peace, and joy can ever be attained either by individuals or by the world. Work, work, work, especially work in your heart and mind, in the hours of daily life. "The kingdom of God is within you."—Luke xvii. 21.

The Atonement before us was to be effected on the occasion of numbering the people. There is no express direction as to how often the people should be numbered ; yet it is evident that

numbering the people was not wrong in itself, only when it was done it was to be accompanied by the offering of the ten gerahs, or pieces of silver, that no plague might be the result.

The people of Israel represent all things of the Church in man : all the affections, sentiments, ideas, works, and words, in relation to religion.

To number them, is to ascertain their quality and their quantity, to regard their existence, and to seek comfort in their abundance. The Scriptures speak of "numbering our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. xc. 12), and, of considering the divine mercies, so as to know that they are so numerous that they never can be numbered.—Ps. xl. 5. These declarations, and the language of our text, shew that numbering in a proper manner, and with the accompaniment of the offering of silver, is not condemned by the Lord.

Yet, the text before us, where it speaks of the offering of silver, lest a plague should come (12) ; and the terrible punishment of David for numbering the people, shew that there are modes of numbering that bring condemnation and ruin. There is a good numbering, and a bad numbering. Nor is this at all difficult to understand.

If a person number his blessings, or a nation reckon its people or its products, as the evidences of divine goodness, as gifts of heaven calling for gratitude and love, such numbering is not injurious, but rather tends to deeper adoration, and to profounder wisdom.

But if a person number his blessings, or a nation number its possessions from vain glory, or under the persuasion that such gifts are really their own, and are evidences of their merit and grandeur, then such numbering is most pernicious, and indicates the speedy approach of dread calamity. Mark the terrible history of the Babylonish king, Nebuchadnezzar. He surveyed the mighty capital of his kingdom, and swelling with the spirit of pride exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken : The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men ; and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field : they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass on thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. The same hour was

the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar." He became insane. He was, in fact insane, from pride before. This was simply the outward exhibition of what had inwardly taken place.

So in the case of David. He had become marvellously prosperous. Every foe was put down. Internal dissension, and external war had alike been overcome. Abundance blessed him on every side. Yet both his people and himself were sunk into evil states; states of self-elation, and self-complacency: for this is the import of the terms. "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah."—2 Sam. xxiv. 1. The Lord is said to be angry when He appears angry to the evil man. The sun is said to be red and lowering, when the atmosphere is thick, lurid, and heavy. The sun is really bright and unchanged above. So, when the soul's atmosphere is full of dark and evil states, the Lord appears wrathful and terrible, and the results of such wickedness will be all the misery and ruin, which the benighted spirit attributes to the anger of the Lord.

While, then, from pride and arrogancy in the king, and from the apathy of the people, this numbering was persevered in and completed, notwithstanding the protest of Joab, the sin was accomplished which placed them under the power of destroying angels, and which was outwardly exhibited in the pestilence which slew seventy thousand men. The three punishments proposed by the prophet Gad to David, represent the three forms of affliction which come to the soul which claims merit in goodness, and arrogates virtues to itself, as its own.

Gad came to David and told him, and said unto him, "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days pestilence in thy land?"

The seven years of famine represented an utter deficiency of goodness and truth, for these are heavenly food. The soul full of its fancied merits closes itself against those celestial purities and joys which are a present blessedness, and which are only given to humble, self-denying, self-condemning love. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The three months' flight before enemies represent the harassing of the soul by evil spirits. When the inflated mind deems itself quite sufficient, quite rich enough in itself for all its requirements, without the defence of Omnipotence by which the confiding Christian is surrounded, what bitter infestations it is doomed to bear! Its state is described in the pathetic words of the

Psalmist, "My soul is among lions: I lie among them that are set on fire, the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword."—lvii. 4. By such chastenings are many of those who say they are rich and have need of nothing, taught amidst bitter experience that they are of themselves wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.—Rev. iii. 17.

Those who attribute goodness and truth to themselves are as unable to contend with success against the powers of darkness as a single arm is to thrust back the advancing billows of a storm on the ocean.

The third punishment, the three days of pestilence and the destruction of seventy thousand men, represented the devastation of the most sacred feelings of the soul. With spiritual pride, the tenderest emotions die. There is a blight on our holiest sympathies. The fine gold becomes dim. The child-like love, that inward innocence, which is the essence of every virtue, and which recognizes a divine hand in everything, is struck by pestilence. From Dan to Beersheba there expires seventy thousand men. There is a flatness, a deadness, a meanness which come over the heart, and which tell how truly we have fallen, while we vainly dreamed we had climbed up to heaven by the strength of our self-conceit. Such is the numbering that brings a plague.

Let us turn, now, to the numbering which is accompanied by the offering of the ten pieces of silver, the half a shekel, to the Lord, for the service of the sanctuary. There are times when it is good for the soul to notice its spiritual progress and be thankful.

In the discipline of regeneration, there are sometimes long periods of dreary days, and weariness lengthened out, extremely hard to bear. We seem to make no progress. The happy times we once had, come seldom, or seem entirely to have disappeared. The autumn is fading into winter, and we dread a darkness, darker still. We are almost in despair; some one sorrow, it may be, long drawn out, infests us. At such times it is not forbidden to number our mercies. Nay, it is a duty to look at the bright side. We should take stock of the blessings which have flowed from the divine hand, and from soul to body, from head to foot, have made their number like the hairs of the head. When the one speck before the mind's eye has well-nigh blotted out the universe, it is well not only to brush it away, but to recount with holy pleasure the stores of blessed things which Divine Love and Mercy have bestowed upon us. Only let us view them with the feeling expressed in the sacred exclamation,

“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—3.

This spiritual confession of all our mercies being from the Lord, which they really are, is the offering of silver. The ten gerahs, or ten pieces of silver, represent the spirit of all heavenly truths.

Spiritual truths, as compared with the lessons of the letter of the Word, are like silver compared to iron. Hence it is written, “The words of the Lord are pure words : as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”—Ps. xii. 6. For iron I will bring *silver*, the Lord says by His prophet.—Isa. lx. 17. And in the Gospel, the inner truths of the divine commandments, the epitome of the whole Word, are represented as in our text, by ten pieces of *silver*. “Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?”—Luke xv. 8. The beauty, brightness, and worth of silver make it a perfect correspondence of the spiritual sense of the Holy Word ; and the importance of this sense, as the indispensable means of leading us to the highest states of heavenly goodness, is represented by the interesting fact, that we cannot refine *gold* except by means of refined *silver*.

The ten gerahs, or silver pieces of our text, which are to be offered to the Lord for an Atonement, when the numbering was effected, and then to be used for the service of the tabernacle, teach us that we may take notice of our acquirements in the regenerate life, of the graces, virtues, and possessions we have attained, if at the same time we acknowledge from spiritual wisdom, that all these heavenly riches are from the Lord in us.

They are used for the service of the sanctuary. They are like the silver of Joseph’s brethren, which was returned in their sacks, although they got also their supply of corn. All that we give to the Lord, is really employed by Him in blessing us again.

Thus does the silver of inward truth unite us to the Lord Jesus, and make us At-one-mind with Him and His blessed kingdom, enabling us whenever we are comforted by the self-knowledge that the riches of heaven have been to some extent unfolded within us, to glory at the same time in the acknowledgment, that to the saving mercy of the Lord Jesus, we owe all we have, and all we are ; the more we have, the more we owe. Let us then cast all our crowns before Him, the King and Lord of all.

SERMON XLIV.

THE WORSHIP OF THE GOLDEN CALF.

“And all the people brake off the golden earrings, which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf : and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”—Exodus xxxii. 3, 4.

The scene which is related in the chapter before us, is one which might fairly surpass belief, if we were not daily in the habit of seeing the astounding depths of forgetfulness of God, into which human nature can sink.

Here, were the Israelites, with Aaron at their head, when left but forty days without Moses, engaging in strange idolatry. The same people who had been delivered by Omnipotent Love ; who had witnessed the wonders by which their bondage was broken ; who had crossed the Red Sea on dry land ; who were daily fed with manna, because no harvest could be found in the sterile wilderness ; who had been left by Moses only that he might obtain for them still higher blessings ; these very people, with Aaron at their head, were found worshipping a golden calf, their own hands had made, and crying, “These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

What an amazing revelation of human folly ! How humbling it is to our fallen nature, to find such disclosures of its weakness and its wickedness unveiling themselves before us, both in divine and human history. Let us learn from it to beware of ourselves, and to keep alive in ourselves, those blessed lights of divine truth from the Holy Word which alone can guide us safely in the “way that leadeth to life.”

The selection of the “calf” as the object of Israel’s idolatry on this sad occasion, reminds us that the worship of a bull had been long established at Memphis, the capital of Egypt. The Israelites had been habitual observers of this, and probably had joined in such worship during the centuries of their slavery.

Sir I. Gardener Wilkinson in his *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, states, "Memphis was the place where Apis was kept, and where his worship was particularly observed. He was not merely looked upon as an emblem, but, as Pliny and Cicero say, was deemed a god by the Egyptians; and Strabo calls Apis, the same as Osiris."

"The festival in honour of Apis lasted seven days, on which occasion a large concourse of people assembled at Memphis. The priests then led the sacred bull in solemn procession, everyone coming forward from their houses to welcome him as he passed; and Pliny and Solinus affirm that children who smelt his breath were thought to be gifted with the power of predicting future events."

"The figure of Apis-Osiris generally wears the globe of the sun, and the asp, the symbol of the divine majesty; which are also given to the bronze figures of this bull."

"The sacred ox of Heliopolis, was also dedicated to Osiris (the Egyptian symbol of the Word or Divine Wisdom), and honoured by the Egyptians with a reverence next to that paid to Apis."

He further says, "I have seen an instance of a bull, with the globe and feathers between its horns, standing on a monument built at the side of a mountain, probably the Lydian range behind Memphis,—and over it the name, Pthah-Sokari-Osiris, the God of the West: which was probably intended to represent Apis, in the character of that Deity."

"A black bull, with a white crescent on his shoulder, or a white spot upon the shoulder, and others on the haunch, the nose, round the eye, and on its legs, carrying a dead body, covered with a red pall, is sometimes represented at the foot of a mummy-case, or on a board deposited in the tomb. This appears to be the Apis, in some office connected with Osiris, the ruler of Amenti (the spirit world)."

These statements which relate to Egypt before the time of Israel in Egypt, and during its continuance, indicate the reason, probably, why the Israelites fell into this worship of the calf, when they once more became idolatrous. Their hearts were not estranged from their old idols. The prophet Ezekiel alludes to this when he says, "They did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt."—xx. 8.

And when we remember the golden calf which was afterwards set up in Bethel, by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and the widespread and long-continued idolatry to which it gave rise, we may

perhaps doubt whether this calf-worship was not something ingrained in the sensual nature, both of the Egyptians and the Israelites, and to which they were betrayed continually when they ceased zealously to worship the glorious God of heaven, the One Almighty Creator.

All ages, and all nations have testified to the tendency in human nature to worship. It is irrepressible. Man must worship. When he sinks from a conception of the Adorable One, who is Love Itself and Wisdom Itself, he does not cease to worship, but he worships something more or less worthy in the creation; it may be of spiritual, it may be of natural creation. Almost every object in nature has been worshipped: from the sun to a serpent. Even atheism is but the enormous worship of self. Man must worship; he will worship. Whether he will worship the best or the vilest thing in the universe, depends upon his state in other respects. There is nothing viler than self in its native blackness; which they worship who defiantly refuse to acknowledge anything wiser than their own intellect, or better than their own lusts.

Here, however, the people adored a molten calf, and this as we have seen in imitation of Egyptian worship.

It will not be uninteresting, or uninteresting, to inquire how this peculiar worship originated among the Egyptians. That people as all their remains testify, delighted in the delineation of truth by emblems, which in the works of God, we call correspondences; and in the drawings of men we call representations. In this language, the ox is the symbol of obedience. The steady character of that animal justifies the analogy, and explains its use, both in the hieroglyphics of Egypt, and in the Word of God.

How patient is the ox, how steady, how perseveringly it plods on, either at the plough or the cart. There is nothing brilliant about it, but how useful it is. It is not superb, like the prancing charger, but how quietly serviceable it is in its work, and in itself. It is, therefore, the symbol of that obedience to christian daily duty, which constitutes the first, the indispensable moral basis of the christian character. Allusion was made to this when our Lord said "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—Matt. xi. 30.

It is this signification that appears when we read, "Unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."—Mal. iv. 2. To grow up as calves of the

stall is to grow in goodness from the humble spirit of obedience.

When Ezekiel saw in vision the representation of the affections which are to accompany the Word of God, as four living creatures, he said the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot, (Ez. I. 7), and one of the faces of these living creatures was the face of an ox on the left side.—10. It is the spirit of steady obedience, meant by the calf's foot, and that from clear purpose and intention, to walk humbly with our God meant by the face of an ox, which alone can advance us in the regenerate life. There is a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah which is very striking when we remember the correspondence of the ox. "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.—xxxii. 20. It is clear that to attain true blessedness we must sow the seeds of true principles, beside, or in harmony with, the heavenly waters of divine truth, and let the ox of obedience, and the ass of common-sense be taught and elevated by its sacred guidance, and thus our outer life be sanctified, by union with the inner life of heaven.

The same lesson was taught in the curious hieroglyphic forms of Egypt, by the bull with the sun upon its head. God working in us, as the origin of all our goodness, even the lowest, was thus symbolized before the people. We are not obedient of ourselves, but from the Sun of heaven. Unless we attribute every good we have to the source of good, it is but as the morning dew, and will vanish away. The ox with the sun upon its head, is the true symbol of that sincere attention to every duty, which rejoices in faithfulness and usefulness, and rejoices also in disclaiming all thought of merit, in the heartfelt acknowledgment that every good we possess is from the mercy and grace of the Lord. This disposition of faithful obedience represented in its newness by the calf, and in its fulness by the ox, is of inestimable worth. Without it all other gifts are valueless, and even dangerous. It is upon a steady sense of duty, society reposes. Brilliant talents adorn life, but faithful duty is its base.

The quiet good men, without a history, who do their daily work so well, that they never provoke disturbance or remark, are they who smooth the path of life, and attend to its ever-recurring requirements virtuously, yet are little heard of, and too often little valued. Without them, however, society would be a wreck.

Their services, like those of the air we breathe, are conducted so quietly, that we often forget how much we owe them. They

who patiently feel the power of duty, and do steadily their part in the daily work of the world, are the world's truest benefactors, if not the greatest. They are not gazelles, they climb no lofty height, but they abide in the divine meadows, and are the Great Shepherd's useful ones. The Egyptian character was such, that they valued highly, obedience and science; the twin virtues in the lowest degree of the mind. They admired obedience and practised it. Their character was an embodiment of it. Hence they performed such immense works, as even now are the wonder of mankind. Look at the statues of the Egyptians, and see what quiet content, what patient satisfaction is expressed in every feature. Hence, it is said, "Egypt is like a very fair heifer." —Jer. lxvii. 20.

In their best periods they delighted to represent this disposition of theirs, as heaven derived; hence their pictures, and their sculptures of the ox, surmounted by the sun. But in their degenerate days, they lost sight not only of the origin of their virtues, but also of the meaning of their symbols, and began to adore as gods what they had formerly figured as emblems.

Thus originated calf-worship among the Egyptians, and from them among the sons of Israel.

The Israelites were men of the letter, and not of the spirit. Obedience was their highest righteousness, when they were good; and, especially, obedience in external religion, in rites and ceremonies. They did not worship a living calf, but a molten calf they had made out of their ear-rings.

A real living calf would represent living obedience, in duties which live in the very nature of things. A molten, thus an artificial calf, would represent artificial duties, such as those of their ritual, full of strange and curious ceremonies.

Rituals in religion are of value when they are regarded as means for the reception of higher graces. When the letter of divine service is subservient to the spirit, and the form is regarded as the means of attaining wisdom, purity, innocence, humility and peace. But when form is loved for its own sake; when ceremony is regarded above charity; when the means of grace are thought more of than grace itself; then ritualism is a molten calf to us, and we are crying out, "These be thy gods O Israel, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt."

To engage in religious worship, to a vast number of minds, is a delightful exercise. It is pleasant to sing, to pray, to join in a religious procession, and to enjoy the privileges of divine worship in general. These sacred pleasures are as golden ear-rings to the

soul. When justice and charity are regarded as the spirit of piety, then piety itself is divinely beautiful. Religion's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. But, when ritual is regarded for its own sake, without any reference to internal graces, when piety is without true charity; when religion has no regard to enlightenment or justice, then worship even becomes an idol, sacred service degenerates into superstition, the incense of prayers that should go up to heaven is mere smoke that hangs about the earth.

Prayer is blessed when it deepens our humility, sweetens our disposition, and strengthens in us the spirit of justice. Praise is beautiful when it flows from an adoring heart. When we approach the King of heaven and earth, and sing praises with the heart and with the understanding also, our sympathies with all that is pure, elevated and holy are expanded.

But worship without charity, without justice, and without heart is entirely worthless. Who can hear the droning whine of perfunctory devotion, however embellished by correct intonation, and enriched by music, and not turn away in sadness of heart. Where worship is only this; where there is nothing to encourage the soul to inward communion with the Lord; to struggle against all that is mean, low, impure, and selfish; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. The substitution of ritual for regeneration, of letter for spirit, of form for essence, of solemn trifles in ceremony, for battling against sin, was the great tendency of the Jewish character.

"Stiff in the letter, lax in the design."

It was this idolatry of the sensuous portion of religion that was represented in the idolatry of the Golden Calf. The ear-rings of gold, represented the pleasant things of external obedience to the love of God. The services of divine worship, when presented in the beauties of holiness, are such spiritual ear-rings. They belong to obedience—the ear, but rather to its decorations, than to its essential work. This is self-denial, and an earnest performance of our just duties for the public good.

When worship is made the chief thing, and virtue, wisdom, charity, and a heavenly temper are lightly esteemed, then we are mentally worshipping a golden calf.

"Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth:
While truths on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a single friend;
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;
Happy to fill religion's sacred place,
With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace."

In the middle ages this sin of ancient Israel was repeated on a far more extensive scale. Then droning priests were multiplied whose whole life was a compound of idleness, and the grimaces of devotion. They would engage in wearing gorgeous and frequently changing dresses, repeating unintelligible prayers, lighting candles in profusion, making ostentatious processions, while being quite oblivious to the just laws dictated by love to God and love to man. Envy, hatred, covetousness, lust and passion were all undisturbed in the soul, but this theatrical man-millinery was exalted, and they cried again, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt."

It is impossible to read the accounts which appear from time to time in the public papers of this country, of ministers introducing into the churches lighted candles in the daytime, crucifixes, varied vestments, and multiplied forms, even though they are aware that bitter animosity will be the result, without once more observing the tendency to the idolatry of the Golden Calf. The people went to Aaron when Moses was away in the mountain, and moved him to make for them this Golden Calf.

Aaron without Moses represents religion without the Divine Law.

The people going to Aaron and inducing him to make the object of their idolatry, represents the process by which religion is corrupted. The degeneracy of a degraded people, operating on an obsequious priesthood, really no better than themselves, induce them to give a prominence to such parts of religion as do not cross their evil loves, and make these all in all. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means: and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"—Jer. v. 30, 31.

The end of the idolatry thus instituted by the Israelites and Aaron, was the indignation of Moses, the breaking of the tables of the covenant, the slaying of three thousand men, and the ultimate rejection of the Jewish nation, when the Lord came into the world, from their incapability of forming part of a spiritual church.

The result of the idolatry of the form over the essence of religion; of ceremony over love, mercy, and faith, always leads to that making of the commandments of God of none effect by our traditions, which was represented by the breaking of the tables. The further result is the full destruction of spiritual life, represented by the slaying of brother, companion, and neighbour

to the extent of three thousand men, and ultimately there is an utter rejection of all who persist in this blind and vicious course.

“The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere
To watch the fountain and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink
While others poison what the flock must 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.”

How deeply important it is then, that we should unceasingly watch ourselves, and pray to the Lord for His light and strength ; above all things to put on charity ; to struggle against our inward evils ; to make, by His Holy Spirit's guidance, a new heart and a new spirit, that He Himself may warrant our everlasting peace by the gracious words, “The kingdom of heaven is within you.”

SERMON XLV.

THE TWO FIRST TABLES OF COMMANDMENTS BROKEN AND REPLACED.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.”—Ex. xxxiv. 1.

In contemplating Divine Revelation we must consider not only the perfection of Him from whom it flows, but also the imperfection of the being to whom it is given.

God is a Spirit, and has ever eternal ends in view. Whatever descends from Him must be spiritual, elevated, and holy. “My thoughts,” He says, “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.

The divine side of revelation as originating in supreme wisdom, must have divine thoughts in its bosom everywhere. It is a sphere that proceeds from the infinite and the eternal, and its character must partake of that which is infinite and eternal.

But there is also the human side of revelation. It is addressed to man. Unless it comes clothed in language that he can understand, and that will interest and attract him, it will fail in being a revelation to him. Divine Revelation is a ladder which reaches to heaven, and above which is the Lord, but it must have its foot on earth.

Man cannot be helped unless he is reached; he cannot be reached except by things which come down to his natural state. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”—1 Cor. ii. 14.

But every man is natural before he becomes spiritual; hence the Word which is to render him spiritual must be so written that it will engage his attention, impress itself upon his memory, excite his affections, and command his obedience. All this our

Word does, and, therefore, commends itself to man in all ages, and in all climes. It addresses itself to savage and to sage, to rich and poor, to bond and free, to the warrior and the man of peace, to the sailor and to the landsman, to the peasant and the philosopher.

The Word gives food to every class of mind. It shines, like the sun, upon the evil and upon the good. It descends, like the rain, upon the just and the unjust. "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."—Ps. xix. 7—9.

If man had been different, the Word would have been different, not in its spirit, but in its form. There was a Revelation before the present Bible, to which allusion is made in Numbers xxi. under the name of the Book of the Wars of the Lord, v. 14. We also read of those who speak in proverbs or prophecies.—ver. 27. That Word was adapted to the earlier states of mankind; our Word is adapted to man's later condition.

How strikingly is this alteration in the form of the Word, while in its essence it is still the same, represented by the circumstances connected with the Tables which Moses brought down from Sinai. The tables, as well as the writing were the work of God, in the first instance. After these were broken, in consequence of the idolatrous condition of the Israelites, then Moses was commanded to hew out the Tables, and God wrote upon them. The writing was the same, but the Tables were provided by man.

How often has it been objected to the Word that it hardly appears to be what we might expect a production of Infinite Wisdom to be. It is largely taken up with wars. It is all about the Jews, a small and insignificant nation. It is taken up with details about matters of dress, laws and customs of earth, directions as to food, and circumstances generally of little interest to one who seeks entirely to live for heaven.

To all this, however, the change of the Tables gives the explanation.

The Word in its essence was represented by those Tables. The ten commandments, are simply two drawn out and applied to all the general phases of human conduct. Our Lord, the

Divine Law-giver himself, so divides them. To the lawyer, who asked which was the great commandment of the law, He replied, "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. 38—40.

Thus we see the ten commandments comprised in the two, really involve the whole Word. Divine Revelation may be defined as love to God and man, expanded and applied to all the diversities of life in heaven and on earth : for the Word is settled in heaven, and into its wonders the angels also as well as men desire to look.

How instructive, then, is the incident of the breaking of the first Tables, which was the consequence of the idolatrous worship of the golden calf! It reveals to us that the Word is as we find it because men's low states required this natural covering. It speaks so frequently of wars because men love the scenes of broil and battle ; but after they have been interested in earthly conflict, it raises their minds to higher scenes, and engages them to wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in interior places. The bodily wars of the Israelites conduct to the wars of man's soul, and to the divine victories of Him who goes forth conquering and to conquer.

There is a description of an earthly country of great beauty and great fertility : a land flowing with milk and honey ; but this alluring prospect is given only to image to us that celestial land which is the everlasting home of all the good. Far otherwise would the Divine Word have been if man had remained spiritual. Then would divine things have been conveyed in their own language, the language of pure correspondences. There would have been no Jewish history as it is, but the states and laws of the regenerate life would have been palpably shewn to be the object of divine lessons. The law of the Lord would have been manifestly seen to be perfect, converting the soul. The Word of the Lord would have been known by all to be Spirit and Life.

But this could not be. Mankind have been, like the Israelites, too prone to worship the golden calf. Their minds have been debased, and their taste changed, so that a purely Divine Revelation, with no use made of human elements, such as please the natural man, would not have been received. None would have understood it, none would have read it. Hence, in the

actual Word we have history, biography, politics. A whole series of events are recorded that interest the man whose spiritual desires are yet but feeble. The child loves his Bible. The peasant and the peer alike find its pages attractive. It has had increasing numbers of readers in every age and every nation, since the Jews surrendered the sacred deposit to mankind. And now in one hundred and fifty languages it has, probably, more readers than all other books put together.

The proof that the Word in its present form is the best adapted for the purposes of Divine Providence is its success. It is universally received more or less. The devout accept it, and live upon its sacred lessons which they perceive in the letter, and gleaming as holy rays through the letter. They, by a holy instinct, divine much of its hallowed meaning, because they hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The child ponders over the stories of Joseph and Samuel, and our blessed Lord; and eternal things enter his youthful soul, and draw him upwards.

The traveller reads the Holy Book, and is interested in its delineation of the customs of eastern lands, and compares their past state with their present. The soldier reads it for its descriptions of warlike scenes, the politician for its delineation of the rise and fall of kingdoms. Even the doubter reads it to criticise and dispute; the unbeliever to deny. It is thus universally present and accepted more or less serviceably by all, and it exerts a divinely modifying influence where it is often not suspected.

Many a mind that now opposes and disdains the Word is nevertheless indebted to it for the comparatively orderly life he leads. The truth of the Word acting upon him through mother, nurse, family, and society, has formed him to steady orderly habits, and when he is maintaining that he can be virtuous without the Bible, he is unconsciously practising the virtues which have really been laid and nurtured by the precepts and the practices of dear old friends to whom the Bible was all in all.

This wonderful adaptation of the Word to the natural man is an amazing result of divine wisdom and mercy. It discloses the Divine Wisdom, for how few yet are there who are able to rise to the delight of feeding on purely spiritual things. Certainly not one in ten thousand even in cultivated and religious lands. But the authority of the Bible is accepted everywhere in Christian countries, and each person takes much or little of that spiritual nourishment which his soul can bear.

It is to him the bread of life. The letter is selected from the account of the proceedings of men, but within is the writing of God. Its form is human, its essence, its soul, is divine. Even the human is arranged and permeated by the divine : and so it is divine-human. "Hew thee out two tables of stone, like unto the first : and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou breakest."

In the present condition of the Word there are many difficulties, things hard to be understood. It was so with the Word made flesh. He often said hard sayings. The Jews were often shocked. Yet He not only continued to speak in parables, but He justified it. "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God ; but not to them that are without."

Difficulties exist both in the Word and in the world, and for the same gracious object. They are intended to improve man by stimulating him to exertion. The field must be cultivated, or there will be no harvest. The rock must often be blasted, or there will be no road. Virtue and success come from overcoming difficulties. Those nations where there is little toil, by no means furnish the finest characters. Perseverance works perfection.

Hence the letter of the Bible has its difficulties, they are intended to provoke to deeper research, and to greater attainment.

The wonderful way in which the Word of God is adapted to universal man, is one of the most astonishing displays of Divine Mercy. It is the Word taking our nature in the Divine Book, as was personally done when He took our nature in the Incarnation. The material was furnished by man, the hidden essence was the wisdom of God. The Word made flesh, took our infirmities even, and without this could not have lived, been tempted, suffered, groaned and died amongst us, nor have achieved our redemption. A Word too pure for Israel, too pure for the world, could not have been received, could not have been preserved, and, therefore, could not have achieved the diffusion of saving truth among mankind. It was needful that the basis, the letter of the Word should be hewn out of the circumstances and events of his own life-history, the spirit of God writing in it the lessons of regeneration and of heaven. Israel loved the Word because it treated of God's dealings with them. It told of their growth from a family to be a nation ; of their early trials, and descent into Egypt ; of their slavery there, and their wondrous deliverance ; of their marches and conflicts in the wilderness ; of their encampment round Sinai while they received the law of their

conquest of Canaan and all their nation's history. These things formed the Tables hewn out by themselves, but under the direction of Divine Providence. In these, the spirit of the Word was infused, writing the same things as had been given in a former revelation, and which will always be given in every revelation from God—the things of Love to God, and Love to man.

How wonderful it is when we reflect that a history being enacted during nearly two thousand years among a comparatively obscure people, should have been so regulated as to delineate the soul's history in its progress to heaven, and the mental and spiritual history of all mankind. Yet so it is. Its very defects, are perfections in its design. If it had been more perfect, it would have been too perfect for imperfect man.

The Word, as a divine work, is like man, whose imperfection at birth, is the base of his everlasting perfectability; his mind without knowledge, like ground unoccupied, is ready to receive knowledge which can be opened and expanded for ever.

The appearances of the Word, though not true in themselves, are true to man's perceptions, and essential to his conversion. When God is said to be angry, and to revenge, to tempt, and to punish without mercy, these declarations are not absolutely true, but it is perfectly true that the opposition of the divine laws to man, and the fruit of his evil doings which incessantly return upon himself, seem to the sinner to come direct from God, and it is right they should so seem, or he would never be roused to repentance. By these infirmities the Word is assailed, is tempted and tried as it were, and by some rejected and crucified; but by these also it is received by the great majority, receives a home among men, and by the regenerate is ultimately glorified.

They who are obedient have their eyes opened, and they perceive the Divine Writing within, full of spiritual and celestial wisdom. While the self-righteous and self-conceited are exclaiming this book is not divine, see how it sins against good taste and high philosophy; the humble and the contrite confess, "Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, He hath opened mine eyes."

The Word speaks to man in its letter as carnal and earthy; but it leads him on until he becomes spiritual and heavenly.

When the Jews longed for war, and pressed to go forth and exterminate their enemies, and those enemies were such as Infinite Love saw that both for mankind and for themselves, it would be best that the earth were rid of them, the permission to go to fight looked to the Jews like a command. But it was not

so. It was a necessity, which Infinite Wisdom and Mercy, looking to the highest good of the race, could not forbid. The surgeon who cuts out a mortifying ulcer, or removes a gangrenous limb acts not from the desire of maiming, but from the necessity of saving. So with the Divine Being in the wars of the Word. They were permissions that abominations might be rooted from the earth, and that the Word of God might be written. The outer Word was thus furnished by material from man, yet divinely directed and arranged, but the inner Word was inscribed within by the finger of God. By reading of Israel's wars, the soldier (and every man is more or less a combatant) may be enchained to the narrative and interested in the Divine Story, until at length the flashes of holy light break through, and he feels there are enemies in himself whom he must conquer. He has a Goliath, some giant lust that defies all his power to subdue; he has also a little David, the divine truth within, which makes use of sacred words of power,—the smooth stones of the brook, with which he strikes the giant on his forehead and he dies. Thus he learns that "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickednesses."—Eph. vi. 12. So his eyes are opened, and he "beholds wondrous things out of the law."—Ps. cxix. 18.

Thus do we own the Word as it descends among us; thus do we behold it achieving its wondrous triumphs among men; and thus is it glorified.

The descent of the Divine Truth, and its cohering with the sensual desires of man, was represented by the water descending from the mountain, into which Moses cast the dust of the shattered parts of the golden calf, ground to powder, and then gave to the people to drink.—Deut. ix. 21.

Divine Truth enters thus blended with human imperfection, but in time it works itself pure, and shews itself as the "water of life," clear as crystal.

The Word thus with two sides, and one side formed of human material, is thus the conjoining medium between heaven and earth. It is written on the outside for the natural man; on the inside for the spiritual man, and for angels.

How strange it is that we should so much have forgotten this great truth! For, how could a revelation be given from God, and not have a divine side towards Him? How could a revelation be received by man, unless it had a human side towards him? How could it conjoin the two together unless it had somewhat belonging to each?

The book in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, as seen by John, was written within, and on the back (Rev. v. 1), and was sealed with seven seals, because the true character of the Word can never be opened, until both its inner and its outer meaning are admitted. Without the writing on the outside, it would be unintelligible to man, and would not be accepted by him; without the writing on the inside, it would not lift his contemplations and his aspirations to heaven.

Blessed, then, for ever blessed, be the All-wise, that in forming His Word, He said, "Hew thee out two tables of stone like unto the first." In shape the same, in substance different. But, blessed also be His Holy Name that He was pleased to say "I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables."

When the precepts of the Word have thus been accepted in the heart, they communicate light, experience, and wisdom. They give light as to what the will of the Lord really requires. They are divine lamps, by means of which our defilements are discovered. But they not only disclose our impurities, they also bring to view the goodness of our Lord, the order of His kingdom, the misery of opposing spirits, and opposing states. They reveal, also, the necessity of regeneration, and impart the power to proceed in that holy work. The experience thus acquired is the best of all teachers. Hence, the Psalmist, in that grandest of all the Psalms, the one dedicated to the setting forth of the excellence of the Divine Law, the 119th, exclaims, "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. Therefore I love thy commands above gold: yea, above fine gold."

Lastly, let us daily pray that the heavenly writing thus forming the spirit and life of the Word, may be transferred to the living tables of our inmost affections, so that the new covenant may be ours, whose terms run thus:—"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. xxvi. 33—34.

SERMON XLVI.

THE LORD SEEN FROM THE CLEFT OF A ROCK.

“And the Lord said, Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock : And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by : And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts : but my face shall not be seen.”—*Ex. xxxiii. 21—23.*

Faith is the evidence of things unseen, the substance of things hoped for. Faith is the confidence of the heart, so far as it is renewed : the quiet trust of love. Faith is calm, reliant, satisfied, resting in the Lord. A beautiful illustration of faith is afforded in the gospel in the case of the centurion who entreated the Lord to heal his servant, who was dear unto him. The Saviour was approaching the house, but the confiding convert sent his friends to say, “I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof ; neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee : but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.” Jesus said, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.”—*Luke vii. 6, 7, 9, 10.*

Full faith is satisfied all is right, it relies, and is patient. Feeble faith is always wanting to see, wanting to know. Full faith sits at the feet of the Master like Mary ; feeble faith like Martha is restless and careful about many things. Thomas would not believe unless he saw and touched, and felt and handled. But the Lord said to him, “Thomas because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, but blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.”—*John xx. 29.* Full faith springs from full love ; and love trusts the Being whom it embraces to be all-sufficient for the things it cannot see ; being satisfied by what it has seen a thousand times, that it is in the hands of an All-loving Friend.

Feeble faith is never satisfied ; it is always running about with its doubts, and fears, and surmises, the confidence of the morning brightness, is altogether gone in the evening shade. It

is not evidence that is wanting, it is love. Love believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never faileth. Let us pray then, in all times of depression and difficulty, for more love. We have said faith fails not for want of evidence, but for want of love.

Nothing can more completely illustrate this than the case of Moses. He had not only seen the wonders in Egypt, but been the instrument of their performance. The Red Sea had parted beneath his rod. The manna had daily come down according to the revelation made to him. He had seen for months the pillar of fire by night. He had seen the glorious appearance of the Lord in the angel of His presence so that it is said the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend.—ver. 11. Yet here was Moses expressing distrust, wanting to know who would be chosen to go with him, evidently unsatisfied, and wanting to see more closely the Divine Presence than he had yet seen.

Moses was informed that the naked Divinity could not be seen. "Thou canst not see my face and live : for there shall no man see me and live."—ver. 20. And, then, the divine condescension and tenderness to his weakness are shewn, and what the Lord would do is declared, "I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. And I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back-parts : but my face shall not be seen."

We may probably feel great astonishment that Moses should have anything but perfect confidence after the miracles, and wonders of Omnipotence that he had witnessed. We think our own distrust is comparatively excusable. Yet our ignorance alone of the wonders of every-day life, prevents us from being aware that every moment we have been guarded by Omnipotent Love, as completely as were the Israelites. We were helpless when we were born, knew nothing of food, or how to obtain it ; but divine care, acting through parents and friends, supplied our every want. We knew nothing of the laws of health, yet we have been nurtured by light, and warmth, and air. We have not had manna descending every day, but we have had a greater variety of food ; and is it less wonderful that Omnipotent Love through the seasons, and with every varied influence of weather, through rain and sunshine, wind and calm, should supply us and all earth's millions with daily bread, and transform that bread into bone and flesh, nerve and sinew. Is it not a wonder of mercy and love that keeps our circulation and

secretions in constant motion, moving in ways but faintly known to us, and keeping up their flow in the helplessness of sleep, as well as the enjoyment of wakefulness.

Then what wonders have been wrought in our mental condition ! Have we not been brought out of Egypt ? Has not our bondage been broken ? Has not our darkness been dispelled again and again ? Has not the Word been given and been triumphant in us a thousand times ? Has not help come in our difficulties in wonderful ways of which we had never dreamt ? Just as with our earthly food, when it passes from hand, mouth, and stomach, where we know something of it, by a divine chemistry which works wonders, it is transformed by ways surpassing our knowledge into strength and all the marvellous tissues of the body, so is it with our mental food. We masticate it and ruminate upon it, and so far we know something about it, but then it disappears we know not whither ; and other views, sentiments, and circumstances hide it in the recesses of the memory, we know not where. But it supports us, it adds to our daily strength, and the sum total of our character. And when we are in strait, and in sorrow ; when we are sorely tried, the lessons that have been hidden away come forth, refreshing and strengthening as a healing potion from a cup held by an angel's hand.

With all these experiences of an adorable Providence, why then are we often so anxious, so wishful to see, so unable to confide ? Why so much restlessness, and so little faith ?

We cannot see the Lord's Providence naked, any more than Moses could see the naked Divinity in the face. Our Heavenly Father allows us to perceive as much as is good for us, more He cannot. He says spiritually to us, as was literally said to Moses. "Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock."

By the "place by me," is meant a state under my protection, — a state in conjunction with me ; "and thou shalt stand upon a rock," intimates that the soul's true support is the Rock of the Word of God.

Our Lord alludes to the same Rock when He says, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man who built his house upon a rock." — Matt. vii. 24. The same Rock is referred to when it is written, "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 hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God ; many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." —

Ps. xl. 2, 3. The same Rock formed that faith in Peter's mind, which occasioned him to be called a rock-man which the word Peter implies. Upon this Rock of the Word, and especially upon the acknowledgment of the Lord, the very soul and life of the Word,—the Living Word, the church is built, and when so founded and established in the soul, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. The same Rock is understood when it is said, "Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste."—Is. xxviii. 16.

Opinions which exist in the memory as speculations, are like sand on the sea-shore ; divine truths bound together by love, are a firm Rock on which our hopes may be soundly built. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—1st Cor. iii. 11.

The "place by me," which the Lord indicates to Moses, implies that it represents a state comparatively external, a state yet more of truth than of love. They who are mainly, yet under the influence of knowledge and truth, and but little realize the power of pure love, are said to be *BY* the Lord or *WITH* the Lord ; those who have realized states of inward love, are said to be *IN* the Lord. Our Saviour said concerning His Holy Spirit as the Comforter, "He dwelleth *WITH* you and shall be *IN* you. I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you."—John xiv. 17, 18. "God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."—John iv. 16.

It is interesting to notice the petition of Moses, and Jehovah's reply. Moses said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." Jehovah replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee." How often are we all like Moses, anxious after outward splendour, dignity, and shew. The heroes of earth yearn after pomp, the vain dream of fame is the gaudy wreath for which millions pant, and toil, and spiritually starve, yet how clearly are we taught, that in the divine idea, the only true glory is in being good. To Moses's prayer to see glory, the answer is, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee." And the Divine Speaker adds in words which will be better understood if we translate them more exactly than they are given in the ordinary version, "I will be gracious to whom I am gracious, and I will shew mercy upon whom I do shew mercy."—ver. 19.

The meaning is, that mercy and grace proceed from the Eternal, on unalterable laws. He always gives grace to those who will receive grace. He always gives mercy to those

who will receive mercy. He is unchangeably good. He was then, and is at all times shewing mercy, and imparting grace to all who seek these blessings at the divine footstool, and he will never depart from His laws of order, which are laws of love.

The Lord is not moved to His merciful operations by our prayers. He waits to be gracious. He secretly prompts the prayer, whose petition He grants. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John xv. 7.

He will never depart from this graciousness. He will always be gracious to those to whom He is now gracious; He will always be merciful to those to whom He is now merciful. "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good." "I am Jehovah," is His declaration, "I change not, therefore, O Jacob, thou art not consumed." He is Love Itself. To cease to be Infinite Love, would be to cease to be God. Let us rather, then, imagine that the sun will cease to shine, that waters will flow upwards, that heat will cease to warm, than doubt the tender, the unceasing mercy of Him from whom our salvation comes. "He WILL be gracious to whom he is gracious: and He WILL shew mercy to whom he does shew mercy."

"Thou shalt stand upon a rock." Happy are they who are placed spiritually on the Rock of Ages. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."—Ps. lxi. 2. "For their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges."—Deu. xxxii. 31.

On the Rock of Divine Truth we may see the Lord, but not the face, the interior essence, the ardour of the unclothed divinity. In this respect, no man could see Him and live.—ver. 20. But the back-parts, the externals, the humanized manifestations of the Deity may be seen, and are seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Humanity of Jehovah is here meant by the back-parts, and elsewhere by the heel (Gen. iii. 15) of the Lord, because it is the Lord brought down to man. The Infinite glow of Godhead is too high for man or angel, but in the mild splendour of the Divine Humanity, the gracious countenance of the Divine Man, the glory of our Heavenly Father may be beheld and enjoyed by His unspeakable Mercy. He that sees Him sees the Father. He is the Father in the heavens, to whom we are to look and to pray. "My back-parts thou shalt see."

The Lord further said to Moses, "While my glory passeth by, I will put thee into a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by."

The Rock, as we have seen, represents Divine Truth ; a Cleft of the Rock represents Divine Truth narrowed, confined, obscure, such as it was amongst the Jews, and such as it is by all who have not yet entered into interior religion. They think about heaven, but only as a place of enjoyment, of outward splendour, glory, and gratification. They know yet nothing of its eternal laws, and real celestial character. They are as yet only in a Cleft of the Rock. Still divine mercy places them there, and protects them there. They know something of the letter of the Word, but very little of its spirit and life. They are only in a Cleft of the Rock. They are permitted to see the lower things of the Almighty, but not the higher and grander ones. The Lord arranges in mercy for their states. He covers them with His hand. But until their states are more advanced, they can only be in a Cleft of the Rock. Yet the Lord shews them as much as they are able to bear.

These divine words have a sublime lesson for us in relation to the Lord's Providence.

In this respect, we are often anxious to see the divine ways in the face. We should like to know our future. We would fain pry behind the curtain which a merciful Father and Saviour keeps entirely under His own control. We would like to see coming events ; and, doubtless, if this were possible, we should like to touch and shape them. How miserable would be our failure, if we could touch the secret causes, and shape the events to our wish. How often what we *do* know turns out, after awhile, quite differently from what we supposed. The unpleasant circumstance from which we shrunk, and over which we grievously lamented, has led to some of the happiest events of our lives. The plan we contrived and hoped would be attended with the highest advantages, has resulted in utter failure, in untold evils. Joseph was made a slave, and cast into prison, even his character assailed, and for two years he was thus a captive ; but that was only the bitter path by which he was led to the highest usefulness, and the highest honour. Those who beheld the Saviour's crucifixion were overwhelmed with grief and despair, yet out of that death has sprung mankind's life. Our churches, our schools, our charities, our progress all date from the Cross. We can see the back-parts of the Divine Providence, but we cannot see its face. And in proportion as we become as little children in heavenly innocence we shall not wish to see more. We shall be satisfied the Lord does all things well. He gives little when little is good for us,

and much when much is good. What can we see, what can we know, we are but in the Cleft of a Rock. But our Heavenly Father sees and knows all. Why then can we not be satisfied to leave all care to Him, who careth for us, faithful only to do our duty, and to confide in Him.

See how tranquilly a little child rests on the lap of its mother. It loves, and confides, and is quiet. Its innocence dwells in ignorance, and is content and calm. The true Christian will have a similar innocence, but dwelling in wisdom. He is wise enough to know that Divine Providence is infinite, and always has eternal ends in view. He sees the lilies how they grow. Rooted to the same spot, they cannot seek the rains they need, or choose the breezes which are essential to their life; yet the refreshing showers come, and the invigorating winds blow, until they bloom, expand and brighten; and "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

We observe the birds of the air: "they sow not, neither do they reap." They have no rational or far-seeing powers to calculate and provide, yet our Heavenly Father feedeth them.

Shall we, then, for whom creation exists and stands arrayed; who are the immortal children of the Eternal God; who know that He is infinitely wise, and infinitely loving; who have had experience of His care ever since we came naked and helpless into the world; shall we who have gathered power and ability with every year; who know from the Word, from the world, and from all things that it is His will that every child of His should become an angel; shall we repine because we can only see the back-parts of the Divine Providence, and not the face? Oh no; let us rather adore the wisdom that saves us from so many anxieties, and provides us with every needful blessing without painful cares for the morrow. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof:" sufficient also is the good thereof. "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

The good will have trials as well as the evil, but none more than they need. The Lord covers them with His hand, and uncovers them as their necessities require; but "He doeth all things well."

The child thinks it very hard often to be compelled to stick closely to its lessons, those wearisome lessons which it can so little understand; but the time comes when it can see the back-parts, the events of life, for which those lessons have been preparatory, and it has blessed the kind pressure that led to its duty being done.

. . The invalid who is under the direction of a kind and skilful surgeon, is often impatient to remove the bandage, or to exchange

the treatment which experience and discretion have laid down, to accomplish a thorough cure. At length he sees the result, and he rejoices. He honours the man who insisted upon that discipline which resulted in solid restoration, and perfect health. So will it be with us in the results of our spiritual life, only let us trust and love.

Of all the angels it was said to John, "These are they who have come through much tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

They had often been in sorrow; often been tempted and agitated; their years have seemed to move slowly, and wave after wave of trouble had rolled over them. They had struggled for principle; often had the world been against them. They had been depressed, but they had been faithful; and now they could see the back-parts, the operations of Divine Providence, all evolving everlasting purity, and everlasting joy. They would now never wish to recognize anything more than the divine hand in all that they have, and in all that they have not; content with all that pleases Him; from Him they feel they have every blessing. To Him they delight to give child-like and never-ending praise.

How grateful should we be to that adorable Providence which raises us to stand upon the Divine Rock, when we look to Him for aid, and then to shew us the glory of His goodness. His *goodness*, that is what we need to see. We have heard of His severity, and it has seemed to us that His frown has been darkly over us. Oh, could we but see His goodness, His pardoning tenderness, His reconciling love; then all our burden would pass away, the world would be a new world to us; all things would be covered with brilliant light.

"If God would speak to me,
And say He was my friend,
How happy I should be.
Oh! how would I attend."

He speaks, and says, "I will place thee in a cleft of the rock." Thou shalt see so much as will gladden thy heart; as much as thou canst bear. Thou shalt see my goodness, yet thou shalt not be dazzled, and overpowered. "I will cover thee with my hand;" I will protect thee in thy weakness: and when thy strength increases, "I will take away my hand," and thou shalt rejoice in the unclouded splendour of heaven. "Arise, be enlightened, for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee." "My back-parts thou shalt see;" and as events unroll themselves before thee, thou shalt know and confess that *Infinite* Love and Mercy have ruled in all My dealings towards thee, and all shall issue in everlasting order and peace.

SERMON XLVII.

THE LORD'S NAME DECLARED.

"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD, GOD, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7.

The sublime scene of which the record is before us must have been deeply impressive to Moses. It would recal in the most vivid manner his first vision at the bush. As there, so here, it was Jehovah filling an angel with his Spirit, (Ex. iii. 2), for the very person of Jehovah could not be seen, and was not seen before the incarnation.—John i. 18 and v. 37. An angel filled for the time with the glory of the Lord, his own consciousness laid asleep, was the Shekinah, the representative of the Godhead, and spake as God. What a series of wonders had passed since the first revelation had broken on the soul of Moses in the wilderness. The rescue of His people from haughty but humbled Egypt; the passage of the Red Sea; the descent of manna; the glories of Sinai.

There was the fulfilment of what God had promised; and the rebellion of the people, even his own distrust, in striking contrast. Moses hastened to bow down his head to the earth, and to worship. Deeply, doubtless, would this wondrous scene induce humility and adoration. Let us also enter into this spirit, and read and ponder over the divine character as proclaimed on that memorable occasion.

Let us notice, first, the Divine Trinity as presented in the words, "The LORD, the LORD, GOD;" or, Jehovah, Jehovah, God. This is a Trinity, inherent in the very nature of the Divine Being, in One Divine Person, for "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah."—Deut. vi. 4. There must be the Divine Love, the Divine Wisdom, and the Divine Power. The Father, the Word,

the Spirit. God is Love, God is Light, God is Omnipotent. These three are ever in One ; Jehovah, Jehovah, God.

The Word, or Wisdom of God, which manifests His love when clothed in the lower robes of our nature, became the Son ; "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."—John i. 14, and xvii. 5. And God (EL) in Hebrew is the term for power. Hence, as we said, the three terms, Jehovah, Jehovah, God, present our Heavenly Father to us before the Incarnation in the essential Trinity which must have been eternal ; Divine Love, Divine Wisdom, and Divine Power. God from eternity must have been infinitely loving, infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful. "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God."—Isa. ix. 6. Thus, even in the very earliest records of revelation, our blessed Lord is presented as an object of the tenderest endearment, of adoration and love. The grim god of the ascetics, is not the God of revelation, or of the universe, but a transcript of their own harsh natures. They reproach, condemn, and curse ; and they think that God "is altogether such an one as themselves."—Ps. l. 21. But let us hear Him proclaim His own character, and how different is the sound. How full of encouragement is that consoling assurance which the Eternal proceeds to make, "merciful and gracious." It is not hard, repellent, stern and vindictive, but "merciful and gracious." Penitents have ever found Him so. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him ; to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him. He, also, will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth them that love Him." This is ever the divine assurance ; blessing for the good, reception for the penitent, and this from the essential nature of His own Being, not for the sake of another. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine OWN SAKE, and I will not remember thy sins."—Isa. xliii. 25. Let us remember to our comfort then, that the blessed God of heaven is, and ever has been, merciful and gracious. These two expressions indicate the Lord's love as it appears to souls of different degrees in the heavenly life.

To those who have not attained to the deep perceptions of their own unworthiness, the Lord appears gracious, kind and good. But to those who by reason of having entered more fully into the celestial life see their defects more truly, and more vividly, the Lord's goodness is seen to be all mercy. They feel no claim to favour, but only to mercy. They would begin like the

Psalmist, "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for His mercy endureth for ever;" and they would go through their whole lives, as the Psalmist did the Israelitish journey, attributing all to mercy, and nothing to self-merit. And they would end still with the same crowning exclamation, "O give thanks unto the God of heaven, for his MERCY endureth for ever." The sense of favour, or grace, induces gratitude and satisfaction; but the sense of mercy induces prostration of heart, inmost love, and unspeakable joy and peace. The Lord is the source of both, and blesses both. He is "merciful and gracious."

We are next assured that our Heavenly Father is longsuffering. He bears with the evil, much and long. He is an ocean of charity, and "charity suffereth long and is kind."—1 Cor. xiii. 4.

"See, how the mother watches o'er her son,
Fondly to hail and bless each grace begun;
And should he glide from holy virtue's track,
Watches with tenderest care to draw him back.

Yet, oh! if all the love that ever ran
In every mother's breast since time began,
Were all in one vast bosom found to move,
'Twere nothing to our God's Almighty Love."

He is "longsuffering," and when His patience and His Providence have led a sinner to repentance and newness of life, how surely is He ever found to be "abundant in goodness and truth."

"Goodness and truth" are the spiritual food of the regenerating and regenerate mind, and there is an unfailing supply.

"O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfieth the thirsty soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." Goodness and truth are the flesh and blood for the heart and the intellect of man; they impart eternal life. The spiritual and celestial man require this interior food for their daily bread. They hunger and thirst after it, and when they go to the Divine Saviour, who is the same God, Jehovah manifest, they ever find He is abundant in goodness and truth. He who goes to him never hungers, and he that believes on him never thirsts.—John i. 35.

He keepeth, also, "mercy for thousands." Though the servants of the Lord advance in the regenerate life, they have many failings. They do not utterly fall down, but they have many slips. In word and deed they are far from perfect, but the Lord keepeth mercy for them, and will do so for ever. This term "thousands" is a word of indefinite extent, and implies to any amount, to infinity. "His mercy endureth for ever."

The Lord's treatment of evil is next brought before us, both

with the penitent and the impenitent. "He forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin; and that will by NO MEANS clear the guilty."

The word here translated "forgiving," is one that has in it the idea of sustaining and removing. It is rendered in different parts of Scripture, bear, lift, carry, take away, and similar expressions. The word forgive in our language implies a change in the Divine Mind, but it is not so in the original language. The word there only teaches us that the Lord sustains the evils of those who come to Him, and at length removes them. He bears our sorrows, and carries our griefs, and in due time casts our transgressions away from us. "Far as the east is from the west so far doth He remove our transgressions from us." The Divine dealing with sin is thus like all His dealings, full of mercy.

When the soul comes to its Saviour, sin and selfishness are so inwrought into its very texture, that were they eradicated at once, the soul would be scooped out, and disappear. Hence, it is needful that by little and little we should have our spiritual constitution changed by the wonderful working of our Saviour God, while we obey His commandments. Luther once said, "If sin were in my coat I would soon strip it off, and cast it from me; if sin were in my hat I would remove it and get another, but it is through me, and through me, in every direction." "From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores."—Isa. i. 6. Through these corruptions and propensities, the powers of darkness press in upon and infest us. And if we were left unaided we could no more bear the weight of their awful pressure, than our single arm could drive back the ocean's force. But the Lord comes to our help. He removes the force from us, and gives us the consciousness of entire freedom. We exult in being released from captivity. We know not by what wondrous mercy the dark clouds have been broken off from us, our lions have been muzzled, our giants been hushed, and our darkness turned into day. But it has been by the Lord our Heavenly Father, who became our Redeemer and Saviour since the day we have sought His help. He beareth our iniquity, transgression, and sin.

In the days of His flesh it is written, that "When even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias, the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

So, when we come to the same Saviour faint and sad, in the

evening of our states of weariness with the world and with sin, overloaded with the griefs and sorrows of a misspent past, He ever bears our iniquities, transgressions, and sins, delivers us from condemnation, and gives us the glorious liberty of the children of light.

The Lord does yet more. When we are strong enough, we are allowed to be tempted with such evils as we are able to overcome, as the Israelites fought with and conquered the polluted tribes of Canaan which they had to dispossess, and by His omnipotent help we overcome them. Then, the sins themselves are borne away to the recesses in the circumference of the soul, and their places are filled with holy affections, pure thoughts and sacred virtues of every kind. Thus, the soul, once a land of all impurities, like a Canaan utterly corrupt, becomes a kingdom of Solomon, a land of peace. The wilderness becomes like Eden; and the desert a garden of God. All this is the work of that adorable mercy, which bears first, and then carries away, our iniquity, transgression, and sin.

The three terms used for evil are not synonymous. Iniquity, refers to evil in the affections; transgression, to falsity in thought; and sin, to the union of both in evil deeds. The Lord removes them all as we co-operate with His Holy Spirit by a sincere striving to walk in His divine commandments. We do that which is lawful and right; and He saves our souls alive.—Ezek. xviii. 27. "Blessed be His Holy Name."

We come now to another portion of the divine description. "But by no means clearing the guilty."

Hitherto we have dwelt upon those aspects of the divine character which are manifested to the good, and to those erring ones who are striving to become good. We have now another aspect of the Divine Being to consider, His relation to the obstinately wicked. And this, too, is a relation of Infinite Love; for Divine Love requires Divine Order; and the salvation and happiness of the good require the separation and rejection of the wicked. Hence the words, "By no means clearing the guilty." "By no means." Oh that these words might unceasingly sound in the ears of every wicked man. By no means clearing the guilty. For the wicked are continually deluding themselves that there are many means of avoiding punishment, while retaining sin.

The forgiveness of the priest, say some, is an admirable means specially provided to make a clean breast, and have all wiped away. A prayer for mercy just at the last hour; as if it had

not been MERCY which had been wooing man all his life, when he could have changed his nature. A belief that the Lord Jesus had been fully punished by the wrath of God for all our sins, and, therefore, we ought not to be punished, is, according to some, the means of means to transform in a minute, the guiltiest wretch into a fit companion of archangels. To these, and to all specifics such as these, the words of our text stand as a perpetual condemnation. "By no means clearing the guilty." So long as a man is guilty, so long he is condemned. He is guilty so long as he loves sin and does it. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."—John iii. 19. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that DOETH righteousness IS RIGHTEOUS."—1 John iii. 6, 7. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."—1 John iii. 10. The dread of a guilty man is not a dread of sin, but a dread of punishment. His sin is as dear as ever, and he would commit it again and again, if he dared. He does not repent of his guilt; he repents of being discovered, and of being about to suffer the reward of his misdeeds. Take away the terror, and the inwardly wicked man flies again to his wickedness. He never repented of having slighted, disobeyed, and defied the God of Love. He never repented of having injured his neighbour, broke his peace, or plundered his property, and He who reads the hearts sees he is guilty still. He by no means clears the guilty. Let him cease to be guilty. Let him cease to love sin or to do it. Let him abhor the evil within him, and detest the selfishness that would plunder others, or the rebellious ingratitude that takes the blessings of the Saviour's universe, and tramples upon His laws. Let him hate sin, seek his Saviour, and become a new man, and then he will find a loving arm to help, that will bear away iniquity, transgression, and sin; though it will by no means clear the guilty.

We must be born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, become new men, and as we walk in obedience to Him, we shall have that character formed within us that will fit us to live where angels live, because we love what angels love.

Our change of heart and mind will be gradual. Not that we are to take steps for it to be gradual, but from the nature of the case, "It is first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn

in the ear."—Mark iv. 28. We should strive as we would with a diseased body, that by full obedience to all the directions of the physician, the cure shall be as rapid as may be, but we shall find that much tribulation and steady striving alone fit us for the realms of the blest. Our Divine Saviour watches over us, gives us help, and in due time will say of us, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." But He by no means clears the guilty.

There is a passage in the epistle of James which has puzzled and pained many an anxious soul in connection with this word "guilty." "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."

The word *point* which is in italics, and therefore not to be considered as belonging to the text at all, has distressed multitudes of tender consciences. They have thought that with all their endeavours they would miss some little point, and then be adjudged guilty of breaking the whole law. But the Apostle meant to teach no such thing as that. The child which is striving to walk, but yet through weakness stumbles, does not offend. It is purposed wrong which righteously offends. The soul which is lovingly striving to keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus, though from weakness it often fails, does not offend. It is borne with, and grows in strength. It gradually rises in purity, until it comes to perfect love, which runs to do its Lord's will, and has neither failing nor fear. What the Apostle means, is, that when a person who is moral in many things, but has some sin to which he is prone, breaks the law that does not suit him, he would break any other law that stood in his way, and he is accounted disobedient and guilty in all. On the other hand, he who truly loves his neighbour, and genuinely strives to do him good, he is accounted as fulfilling the whole law. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well."—James ii. 8. "By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."—1 John iii. 14.

One other feature of His government the Lord brings before us,—the law of causes and effects. "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth *generation*:" strictly unto the thirds and fourths.

It has pleased Infinite Wisdom to link our race together. The human family constitutes a grand chain, each link depending

upon all which have gone before, and imparting its qualities to all that follow after.

By hereditary transmission we know the likeness of parents and grandparents descend, and that affects not the face only, but the mind, the body, the habits. It is a law of unspeakable value : it is the law of progression. By it, the Divine Providence intends that the acquisitions of one generation should be the transmitted wealth of another. Hence, in endless advance, the virtues, talents, and excellencies of parents should be inherited by the descendants as inward riches, far nobler than any outward heritage. The starting point of each generation would thus be higher than that which preceded it.

But, on the other hand, when parents depart from goodness and from God, the sad perversities they impress upon themselves are transmitted also to their children. The iniquity of the fathers is transmitted ; to the children, not as sins for which they have to be punished, but as tendencies against which they have to guard. The avaricious parent transmits the tendency to covetousness ; the drunkard the tendency to drink ; the quarrelsome the tendency to hot tempers. Children have not to bear the iniquity of the parents (Ezek. xviii. 20) ; they have not to be punished for it, but only to be tempted by it.

Not only so, but Divine Mercy stores up in the infant heart counterbalancing tendencies to good. "Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound."

If the fallen nature is a hell in miniature (Mark vii. 21), there is implanted also within, a heaven in miniature.—Luke xvii. 21.

It is iniquity, (crookedness of the affections), not sin, (actual evil) which is transmitted ; and punishment only follows actual delinquency. Of every child, it may still be said, as to its actual state by creation, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." "It is not the will of our Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

Blessed, then, for ever blessed, be the Holy Name of the All Good. All His nature is Tender, Wise, Merciful, and Gracious.

He provides ten thousand blessings in time and in eternity, for the good. He delights to bring those who have strayed, back to His divine fold, bearing, and removing iniquity, transgression, and sin. He will not, cannot alter His Divine Laws, and clear the guilty, so long as he is guilty. "But when the wicked man turns away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. All his transgressions that he hath committed, shall not be mentioned unto him ; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live."

SERMON XLVIII.

THE FACE OF MOSES SHINING AND VEILED.

“But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”—Ex. xxxiv. 34, 35.

The Israelites had many astonishing evidences of the truth and faithfulness of their great leader. By his marvellous power displayed at the Red Sea they were eminently taught that God was with him.

The pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, testified that powers higher than his own accompanied the aged chief; and now the visible presence of gleams of unwonted light about his face was a sign to every beholder that he had been in a presence higher than his own.

Such remains of spiritual intercourse, history has recorded, have sometimes played around the human countenances in later times. The ardour of love demonstrates its energy in the glow of warmth in the human body, and there seems no reason to disbelieve that the energy of heavenly wisdom may disclose itself on sufficient occasions in super-human light. So the radiance around saintly heads has been avouched by many to have been occasionally seen both in ancient and in modern times. The angel with the rainbow round his head, seen by John, shewed the beautiful sphere seen often round the blessed in the spirit world; and the shining face of Moses was a similar phenomenon produced on a lower sphere.

So the face of Moses shone in his intercourse with God: but when he conversed with his people he covered it with a Veil.

But Moses, we must never forget, was the representative of the LAW, given through him from God to men. Every occurrence, therefore, that took place with Moses was typical of what takes place with the Divine Law, in the leadership it exercises in the journey of regeneration, made by Christian men.

We have our Moses, and our Moses is the Law of God. "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," Gal. iv. 24: an excellent schoolmaster, and when obeyed, a salutary and loving one. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."—Luke xvi. 29. They must indeed hear: there is no other way. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."—ver. 31.

In the early states of our reformation, the law seems hard to us, cold, perhaps severe and exacting. It forbids us where we would fain go. It threatens, warns, and admonishes. We are sinful: it is pure.

"Thou shalt not," goes through the divine commands; and where we would often do what worldly love and selfishness desire, the Law comes with its "Thou shalt not," and we are prevented and save our souls alive. If we sincerely obey, the Lord works wonderfully within us, and gives us a love of obedience. The yoke that was once hard, becomes, after many conflicts, first easy, and then delightful. The law which seemed at first our enemy, as curtailing our enjoyments, becomes our friend. The friends of sensual indulgence which it has slain, were really our deadly enemies. The law has broken our fetters for us, brought us out of Egypt, redeemed us from slavery, and points our way to Canaan. The law that curbed us, is a general that disciplined and trained us for the glorious liberty of the children of light. "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."—Ps. xix. 7—9.

When we have arrived at the state to perceive this character of the law, Moses has gone up into the mountain to speak with God. A light, which we have never seen before, beams from his face,—a holy splendour, new to us, breaks from the law which tells us that the law is more precious than thousands of gold and silver. The opening of the Word gives us light: it giveth understanding to the simple.—Ps. cxix. 130. Through the keeping of the divine commandments we become wise, wiser than our enemies (Ps. cxix. 98): wiser than all our teachers (ver. 99): wiser than the ancients (ver. 100). A gleam of glory comes from the face of Moses, a true light, a holy light, a radiance from the glory of heaven.

That the divine commandments are the laws of heaven is the

conclusion of the Christian when he has made them his own by experience. They are the embodiment of love to God and love to man. Not one precept can be neglected, and happiness exist. Let us take the three-fold division of the precepts which they present at first sight, namely, to love God and all that regards Him and His worship, directed by the first three ; to respect our neighbour and do him no harm, prescribed in the next five ; and to abstain, in motive, from the desire of what belongs to another, which is laid down in the last two. These must be the ordinances of a state of happiness. There could not be a heaven without them, and without souls trained to delight in them : to find their heaven in loving God, and promoting their neighbour's good. How would it be possible to be happy without loving God, and thus abiding in Him, who is the fountain of happiness ?

The soul that loves not God is out of harmony with the whole universe, which is created for His pleasure, and moves responsive to His touch. To a soul repellent of God, brightness is a pall : love a crushing hate. The evil of sin is, that it reverses all man's sensations : good is evil, evil is good ; sweet is bitter, bitter is sweet ; falsity is truth, and truth is false. The poor soul is so reversed ; its very nerves as it were made so contrary that what would have been its blessing, becomes its curse ; it becomes a body of death.—Rom. vii. 24. The whole universe rasps it, crushes it, repels it. As the beams of the sun to the eye of the owl are painful, so the eye, the hearing, the taste, the smell, the touch of a soul rebellious and degraded are all deranged, and bring only affliction and distress. In act, the evil spirit says, with Shakespeare,

“Divines and dying men may talk of hell,
But in my heart her several torments dwell.”

Or with Milton,

“Which way I fly is hell : myself am hell ;
And in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.”

How could souls in this condition be made happy or constitute a heaven ? Manifestly there is one way to be saved,—submission to the law of God ; and the first part of that law is to acknowledge God as God, to bow down to none other. We must be born again. That new birth can only come from the Lord, the Regenerator, who operates by His Word. Self, thus dethroned, God enthroned in the supreme region of the soul, better states can enter, heaven can be opened within us ; and with heaven, its innocence, its brightness, its beauty, and its peace. Without,

then, the first part of the law, it is clear there could be no heaven.

It is equally easy to perceive that no heaven could exist without the full operation of every one of the laws of the second division of the commandments. No one law can be trifled with without introducing universal misery; and a violation of any one of the ten, involves and introduces a breach of all.

Suppose, for instance, a society of persons all disposed to set at nought the law, "Thou shalt not steal." A moment's reflection will assure us that the inevitable result would be, universal suspicion and alarm; universal fraud; falsity, and opposition; struggle, violence, cruelty, ferocity, murder. The breach of this one would involve the breach of all—the banishment of all happiness—a kingdom of misery.

So would it be with disobedience to the command, Thou shalt not covet. In inward covetous desire there is a pining for the possessions of others, a hidden stealing in heart, which only waits its opportunity to break forth into outward act; there is the gall of non-possession; there is the smouldering fire of lawless desire: hate and malignity against those who stand in the way of our attainment of the objects of our ever-lurking lusts. With these feelings, heaven, happiness, peace, are clearly incompatible; without repentance, obedience, and regeneration, misery and hell are inevitable in the states themselves. Hence the necessity of the laws, the stern law as the very foundation of a better life. Hence its indispensable existence under all dispensations,—under the Jewish as well as the Christian. There is no possibility of avoiding the leadership of the law. Moses must always bring us out of Egypt. "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets," the Lord Jesus said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whoso shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

The commandments are indispensable; they are given from infinite love, "for our good always." "In Jesus Christ circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God."—1 Cor. vii. 19.

While our evils are strong, the commandments chafe them and seem hard and bitter. They shew us our impulses to wrong and we feel condemned, dead in trespasses and sins. The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. We feel its claims to be righteous. We feel ourselves to be unrighteous, lost. But,

in our humility, we look up, and the great and merciful Saviour is there, who comes ever to seek and to save that which is lost. He lays His right hand upon us, and says, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last." He commands us to arise and to walk,—to walk in the way of His commandments.

In our newness of life, we spring forward with gratitude and with alacrity. We go out with haste as did the Israelites. We are filled with thankfulness and joy. After a time, however, we are suffered to fall into temptations. We have a desert to pass through. Some of our old states return. Many of the evils we supposed were extirpated, are found to have left their roots. Many of the serpents we supposed were slain, we find were only scorched. A sadness comes over us. We have to walk on in the valley, and at times it becomes the valley of the shadow of death. But we must walk on in faith, a faith grounded in love; and aided by the living Lord, our Lord Jesus, the Redeemer, we conquer again and again, and at each victory new affections are given to us by the Lord, a new heart and a right spirit. We begin to love what we once hated; we hate what we once loved. The yoke is now easy, and the burden is light.

The law now becomes elevated in us,—it is like Moses on the mountain with God. It becomes lighted up with the glory of heaven. The commandments of the Divine Law are perceived to be the very wisdom of Eternal Love. The face of Moses shines. What the law utters, is what the highest love utters, is what Christian loves rejoices to do.

The law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." The regenerate heart rejoins, "Oh, how I love Him. He is my Heavenly Father, my adorable Redeemer, my blessed Saviour, my loving Regenerator, my King, my all in all. My heaven is in loving Him. As I draw nearer and nearer to Him, and abide in Him, He gives me more and more the power of loving Him; and in this deep and tender love are stored up the richest treasures of blessedness and peace."

The law in its outward form commands us to do no ill to our neighbour. The law upon the mountain, seen in the light and glory of its spirit, is hailed with joy by the renewed heart which says,—I will do my neighbour all the good I can. Not only would I not injure his person, I would not injure his mind, his thoughts, his principles, his feelings, even. I owe him all the love I can, and nothing but what is in harmony with truest love. I owe him sympathy, affection, good will. I owe him

justice, and all the ministrations of mutual love. I must not repel or destroy his generous sympathies, by withholding a response from these. The law of God is the law of heaven. By being filled with it, and all alive with love, are the angels happy. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law."—Rom. xiii. 10. The law thus seen shines with a glorious light, such as the lower feelings of the mind cannot yet endure.

Yet there is nothing extraordinary in this to the inner mind, it is a native of heaven. It is only in its proper light. Moses wist not that his face shone in speaking with Him. When an internal state is by itself, it is not conscious of its marked difference from, and superiority over, things external. How different is the spirit of the Word from its letter, and how superior. How brightly shines the heavenly Canaan over the earthly; heavenly food over sensual; heavenly heroes over warriors for outward fame. Yet when we are contemplating spiritual things alone, we are not conscious of the contrast; only when the external is sensibly brought before us, do we become conscious how brightly the face of Moses shines, and how needful it is, that when the law addresses itself to worldly men, it must needs be covered with a Veil.

This is, indeed, the very reason why the Word is written as it is. A more purely spiritual revelation would have been too bright for worldly men to bear, whether in their worship or their work. Often is this indeed seen, when external men get a glimpse of the inner glory of divine things. They are like Aaron, and all the sons of Israel, "When they saw Moses, and behold the skin of his face shone, they were afraid to come to him."

It must needs be that Moses must veil himself in speaking with them. They must be commanded a few things to which they can attend, forbidden such things as are grossly wrong in act, and Divine Mercy must thus temper the wind to the shorn lamb.

The Christian of the letter must be led by the letter. Moses must speak to him with a veil upon his face, until higher good, imparted to him from heaven, gives to him the ability to discern higher truths. They must be fed with milk as babes, until they are advanced enough to bear strong meat as men.

This text may also be regarded as describing the experience of the interior Christian in his intercourse with his Heavenly Father. He is blessed at times to enter into communion with scenes and states far above those of time and sense. He ascends

into experiences of celestial love, that mountain where the Lord is transfigured, and speaks heart to heart, and face to face with his Maker, he sees and feels divine things that he cannot express. He is raised for a time far above the atmosphere of earth. He partakes of hidden manna, and has a white stone, and in the stone a name written, that no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.—Rev. ii. 17. Like Peter, James and John, when they were taken up the mountain by their blessed Master, the Christian on such occasions is filled with the thought, it is good to be here. His inner face shines with a sacred light. He sees truth in its inner splendour, he has meat to eat, which the world knows nothing of, and of which it can know nothing. He adores, loves and rejoices at this foretaste of the blissful world to which he goes. He is cheered, animated, encouraged, blessed.

“The light within, beyond all human light,
The power within, beyond all human might,
Gives from each anxious care a full release,
And fills the spirit with a glorious peace.”

But it is not permitted to the soul during its sojourn among men always to remain in this serene height, this golden atmosphere. The Christian must come down to other men, and to other scenes. And, like Moses, he must put his Veil on.

The world must have attention. There are duties to be performed. There are ministrations of love and active zeal, which require us to come down into the valley of life and attend to those good works without which religion is mere sentimentalism, mere self-gratifying dreaming. The hands must be employed on earth, and diligently and faithfully employed, or our inward states never acquire fixity. We must cover our faces, and engage in our every day avocations, as if for the time we had nothing else to claim our interest or our wishes. Thus will duty be duly done.

But we must not keep on the veil too long. We must beware lest earthly things altogether absorb us. The Jews became so immersed in low and sensual states, that they had no heart for anything “within the veil.” A regal Saviour, glittering with outward pomp and show, would have commanded all their hosannas. But the Saviour who brought Divine Wisdom and Love only; who raised souls to a heavenly state; who poured out the splendours of heart, wealth and riches of mind, they could not receive, for the Veil was on their hearts. “Their minds were blinded,” as the Apostle said, “for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto

this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.—2 Cor. iii. 13—16.

The letter with the Jews, was a "letter that killeth." They forgot that though the bark is good, the inner wood of a noble tree is better. The skin is good, but brain, nerve, heart and lungs are better. Earth and time are good, but man is an inhabitant of two worlds ; and though he must go out into earth and time to fix his character, yet all his higher thought, all his highest affections must rise at frequent intervals to heaven. On the mountain of holy love to the Lord the soul is warmed, brightened, and refreshed, and in that mountain, the prophetic words are fulfilled, "He will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations."—Isa. xxv. 7.

An alternation of state is good. Evening and morning are truly good in spiritual things, as in natural. We must be diligent in business, thus serving the Lord ; but we must also look up to the mountains from whence cometh our help (Ps. cxxi. 1), and open our inmost hearts and minds to the Spirit of the Lord. The Sun of heaven will then enlighten and bless us. A warm and sunny glow will make our faces to shine. We shall enjoy for a time the lustre of holy light. We shall go in and out and find pasture.

This ascent and descent, like that of the angels on the ladder which the patriarch saw, will bring a double blessing : a blessing on the mountain where we commune with the Lord ; and a blessing in the valley where our inner states are covered ; which at the same time are the causes of making our interior light so shine before men that they see our good works—our religion in act, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Thus, till Moses has done speaking he must put a Veil upon his face. But when Moses goes in before the Lord, to speak with Him, he must take the Veil off until he comes out.

SERMON XLIX.

THE SPIES AND THEIR REPORT OF THE PROMISED LAND.

"And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not."—Num. xiv. 7—9.

The Israelites had passed from Sinai, where they had made a long sojourn, and advanced into the wilderness of Paran. When the first enthusiasm of their deliverance was over, they had passed through strange experiences. They had suffered themselves to fall into doubts and rebellions. They murmured at times against their food, and loathed the manna. They had become seditious, objecting to Moses and Aaron, as taking too much upon them: not considering that order requires subordination, and some must necessarily occupy the chief, and others the inferior position, for the good of the whole. And, where humility is in the heart, the greatest ruler may be the meekest man. Where each takes the position for which Divine Providence has fitted him, from a sincere allegiance to truth and goodness, it is not man who rules, but the Lord through man.

These chequered states brought chequered joys and sorrows. At times they began to doubt whether the Promised Land was, after all, worth the labour and the trials they had to endure in this long journey, and its various hardships. To meet their state of despondency, and to rouse their hopes, Moses selected twelve chief men, one from each tribe, and ordered them to go and explore, and bring back a faithful report. The explorers went forth and saw the Land of Canaan; they were away forty days, and observed much of the southern portion of the land. It was the time of the first ripe grapes. They saw the glorious mountains

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of Judah. They went as far as Hebron, the old home of Abraham and Sarah ; and as they returned from the magnificent hills and fertile vales, they cut down a bunch of grapes, so large as to need a staff borne by two men to carry it. They brought also excellent pomegranates and figs.

So far as the land was concerned, they all agreed that it was indeed a noble country. In other respects they exemplified the observation that in this world as well as in the next, each person sees what he is adapted to see. The timid saw difficulties, enemies, and giants ; they trembled at the dangers to be encountered ; they shuddered at the walled towns, and the men of great stature : while the valiant Joshua and the courageous Caleb cared little for the obstacles, for God was with them. Their exhortation was, " Let us go up at once and possess it ; for we are well able to overcome it."

The distrustful and fearful Spies, dwelt so much upon the terrors, partly of the real dangers, and partly the exaggerated horrors of their excited and alarmed imaginations, that they carried the whole people almost with them, and spread through the host a chilling discouragement and deep despair.

If it had not been for the firmness of Moses and Aaron, and the two brave men who faced the excited people, and roused them with generous energy to be ashamed of their false fears and rouse up to noble sentiments, the whole people would have perished. They were bent on going back to certain ruin. " Let us make us a captain, and go back to Egypt," they said, insantly determined to let their prospective difficulties overcome all their experience of Divine guardianship of days gone by, and the living protection they enjoyed every hour from the present and all-seeing God, whose pillar of fire was with them every night, and the pillar of cloud each day.

Let us bring these circumstances livingly before us. The excited people, in a tumult of grief and discouragement, ready to stone their best friends ; Moses and Aaron prostrate with shame ; the desert around, the sacred enterprise half completed, and for want of manly firmness about to be completely ruined ; and then see the excitement quelled and the danger averted by the two brave servants of God, who stood forth and uttered the noble, indignant, and grand words of our text, " The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us : a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord ; neither fear ye the people of the land : for they are bread

for us. Their defence is departed from them; and the Lord is with us: fear them not."

One can hardly contemplate this whole exciting scene without being astonished at the blindness of mortals in days gone by: and we are apt to assume that we have a right to condemn such folly as quite beyond any reasonable excuse. We are satisfied, thankless as we often are, we should not have been so faithless, so ungrateful for mercies past, and so wanting in confidence in the divine promises and protection as these unhappy Israelites. Yet, let us not be too confident. The Church of the past, is a type of the Church of the future. "The law was a shadow of good things," (and a manifestation of evil things,) "to come."

We must never forget that we cannot be made heavenly all at once. Between Egypt and Canaan there is a long and chequered journey to be effected spiritually, as well as there was one naturally in the days of Moses.

The events which took place with the sons of Jacob, are just the picture which the Divine Word holds up to us of states to be realized in the experience of to-day. Let us ponder over this chart of our spiritual life, that we may walk wisely in a perfect way, and be of those concerning whom it is written, "He that ordereth his way aright, shall see the salvation of God."

Our experience has, no doubt, corresponded to that of the Israelites, in discovering more difficulties in our way to the land of Canaan we seek than we expected.

We have been discouraged at times; troubled at things around us, troubled with things within us. We had hoped we should have attained a state of serene peace before this time; and although we have won many a victory, and rejoiced on many a happy day, yet there have been periods of weakness which have humbled us into the dust. We have been obliged to confess, our supposed strength has not preserved us from bitterness, when we have been annoyed from slips of temper under provocation; and from defects in word and work, at which we feel greatly humbled and abased. Canaan lies before us, but at a great distance. The thought comes home with a sigh, Shall we ever reach it? Is it indeed worth all this labour, all this endurance? Is not peace a long time in coming? Will it ever come?

We are prompted by the Divine Word within, our Moses, to send Spies forward. We have thrown our contemplations forward. The observations which are made respecting states which lie before us, but which are not yet realized, are the observations of Spies.

He who has fully made heavenly states his own, has become a citizen of the heavenly Canaan. Those blessed principles which the Lord implants in the inmost nature of children, and which give them the capacity of becoming angels are natives of heaven, "of such is the kingdom of God."

But as to the lower part of our nature, the natural man, when the work of reformation and regeneration commences, there is a calling up of sentiments, ideas, and impulses, which have been in captivity there, and which have to be transferred from the memory and lower regions of the mind, into the heart and the inner man. This great emigration has to be effected by changes which were prefigured by all that happened to Israel.

There are apparent pauses in this great work. There are periods of disheartenment, times of spiritual dryness and cold. And then it is needful to send Spies forward to animate our flagging courage by a knowledge of the blessings which are to be attained, and lie in the certain future. We send our minds forward in meditation, and ponder on the blessed things of heaven. We have the means in ourselves, and by the Word, of exhibiting to ourselves all the riches of heaven.

Within the hearts of all men lie
These promises of future bliss,
Which blossom into hopes that cannot die
In sunny hours like this.

All that hath been majestic
In life or death since time began ;
Is native in the simple heart of all,
The angel-heart of man.

The Spies were twelve, one from each tribe, representing every department of religious life and thought. Moses directed them to go southward, and to ascend into the mountainous region of Judah, which lay before them.—Num. xiii. 17. This going southward and up into the mountain corresponds, in spiritual language, to entering into the light of heavenly intelligence, and into celestial love ; the south where the sun is at mid-day corresponding to the full light of intelligence in the soul ; and the mountain to a high state of love.

The season of the exploration is said to have been the time of the first ripe grapes, and it represented for us the period when spiritual life had matured some virtues of real christian faith. Some branches of the holy vines had begun to bear. Some holy states of worship had been fully realized. Some purposes, and aims, and efforts, had been really accomplished, and made us feel how happy we should be if it were always so. It is "the time of the first ripe grapes."

The Spies penetrated to Hebron, the old capital of the country, the land where Abraham dwelt, the centre of ancient devotion, wisdom and worship. They came to the brook Eshcol, named so from the surprising bunch of grapes which was there obtained. They searched the land for forty days, and returned to Moses and said, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." But they had also another report to give. They saw great difficulties. "The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great. Moreover we saw the children of Anak there. "There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."—Num. xiii. 33. How descriptive is all this of those internal self-revealings which come to all Christians at certain portions of their spiritual journey.

They admit that heaven is a beautiful and blessed state. The joys of its goodness and truth, the milk and honey of the land are rich and ineffable. The virtues of heaven are full of grace and glory, these are the fruits of it. Heaven in the abstract, goodness in the abstract, a state in which every motive and impulse spring from love to God and man, a state in which every energy shall be the operation of doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God, is the object of every sincere disciple of the Lord. But there are the difficulties. There are the lowlanders, the Canaanites, which dwell by the sea; and the highlanders, the Amorites, which dwell in the mountains.

There are numerous habits of every-day life which are opposed to our progress in divine things. We are doing constantly a multitude of small faults in our intercourse with others, which are not in harmony with entire heavenly mindedness, these are the inner lowlanders which dwell by the sea. Then, supposing these to be overcome, what a number of Amorites there are which dwell in the mountains;—dispositions to idolize our family, our class, our country, our prejudices, our customs. There are strong interior attachments to evil in a thousand forms which pervade our inner life, dwelling on the mountains of our being and forming inner secret repugnancies to an entrance of the kingdom of the Lord into the soul. Then there are Hittites and Jebusites; things partly good and partly bad, expediences, accommodations, condescensions, doing as other people do, so far as indispensable conformity requires, and yet things not to be justified at the bar of real righteousness. All these constitute spiritual wickednesses

against which we have to wrestle. And some of them are terrible giants. There is the great giant of self-love, that terrible Anak, the father of a monstrous brood, and one who never dies but after many a severe campaign and an awful struggle. Then there are the great giants, which come of the giants hereditarily;—self-will, pride, and lusts of various kinds, which have grown up by indulgence until they shadow over our whole mind and life. There is the giant ignorance, the giant superstition, and a great ponderous creature, the giant apathy. Alas, we seem grasshoppers compared with these terrible phantoms which darken our way and threaten us. Our hearts fail within us, and we exclaim like the frightened Israelites, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." And so long as this dismay, this unfortunate persuasion is with us, we are paralyzed. We even begin to look back, and talk of going again to Egypt. Let us, however, hear what those two noble souls, Caleb and Joshua say, who uttered, by Divine Inspiration, the words of our text, which they addressed to all the company of the children of Israel. "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us: a land which floweth with milk and honey."

Two leading points were expressed in these earnest words: the beauty and richness of the country they had seen, its value being worth all the hopes and efforts of the people; and secondly, that they were not left to themselves; the Lord was with them, and had promised to give them the land for a possession, if they were faithful, obedient and persevering. How true are these two assurances at the present day, when made to the disheartened pilgrim. The land which we go to possess is an exceedingly good land. It is the land of love, wisdom, order, joy, and peace.

Heaven is the land of conjunction with the Lord, and a constant reception from Him of the power of loving Him in return. It is the state of loving all that is His, in heaven and earth. It is a land of interior joys and of outward delights, by human language inexpressible in their fulness and extent. It is the land of high motives, of holiest sympathies, of sweet perennial desires to bless. It is a land where love and wisdom are effigied and pourtrayed in everything. It is the land of fountains of life, of rivers of life, of trees of life, that is, of love.

It is the land of Holy Wisdom, where each angel not only receives much wisdom from the Lord, because his love of wisdom gives him a great capacity to receive, but where communication of

thought as well as outward expression, and the representation in every object around, of whatever is the object of thought, make the conveyance of wisdom from one to another, far more perfect than earth can ever know.

Then all desire good to their fellow-angels : none envy, none trouble, or distress the rest : but each one increases the general bliss, by the possession from the Lord of peculiar gifts and talents, some great and some small, but according to all the requirements of order, and using these for the good of all the rest.

There is fulness of joy there. The plastic nature of spiritual substances, and the orderly character of the angelic minds, produced by regeneration, make the circumstances around them full of order, full of harmony, life, and grace ; their forms, their dresses, their houses, their paradises, their objects of every kind are most lovely. All these things are faintly and feebly possessed by the good here, but in heaven they are wrought out to perfection. "It is an exceedingly good land."

"If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us." That is, if we are obedient, so that the Divine Love can carry out its own gracious purposes in our creation. The Divine Joy is felt in us, when we obey the precepts of His Word. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full." —John xv. 11.

If we obey the Lord's words, then, without doubt, He will carry out His gracious ends, and bring us into the state of heavenly order within, and finally into heaven. Has He not said, "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." "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us." "Only rebel not ye against the Lord."

"Fear ye not the people of the land ; for they are bread for us." How unnecessary it was for the Israelites, so long as they were true to their call and mission, to fear the corrupt and effete nations of Palestine, their history fully shewed. It is equally so with us. Our evils are strong when we are half-hearted. When we are resolute to live for heaven, lovingly trusting in the Lord, the formidable character of our lusts and passions falls away, their defence is departed. "The Lord is with us fear them not."

"The Lord is with us !" What a grand assurance is that ! The Lord, the Omnipotent, is with us ! The Lord, the Conqueror of

hell, is with us! The Lord who has assured us that He will give us power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy is with us! He who conquered all hell can surely conquer hell in us! The Lord, who built up all heaven, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace is with us! "Fear them not."

O! if this sad, distrust, and faintheartedness were done away with, what progress we should make! Our fears and hesitations alone give strength to evils. Look them boldly and steadily in the face and they die. How cowed and dismayed was Israel when the Giant of Gath day after day challenged any man of them to the fight, and defied the armies of the living God! But when a fearless youth stepped forth, and trusting in the Lord his Saviour, and the simple weapons he knew well to use, how soon did Israel's dread lie headless on the ground. So with our several sins. They are all impostures that live upon our terrors. With honest devotion to truth and goodness, trusting in God, their strength would be as weakness. "Fear them not." Pride says I am rooted in your nature, without me you will be insulted and trampled upon, you cannot command respect, you must retaliate and resent. Avaunt, foul spirit, Christian principles, a firm and quiet regard for right, always command respect. I will strive to overcome evil with good by my Saviour's help. Away, I fear thee not.

Covetousness says, Without me, you cannot obtain the comforts of life in this world of competition, I am a giant, and I say you must over-reach and lie, you must absorb your whole being in acquisitiveness to get more thousands, as though your existence depended upon it, although you can neither eat more, nor drink more, nor wear more, but only increase the figures in your bank-book, or obtain the hollow smiles of those who smirk upon the wealthy. Again, the true Christian can say, Away, false boaster, I fear thee not. I will steadily do my duty, using such talents as I uprightly can, and satisfied with what Providence gives, be it little or much.

All fears die beneath the faith of love, which rests upon the Saviour. The lowly spirit unfolds itself to Him, in holy trust, and He lays His right hand upon its head and says, "Fear not, I am the first and the last." "The Lord is with us: fear them not."

SERMON L.

THE PEOPLE BITTEN BY FIERY SERPENTS, AND HEALED BY THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

“And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”—Num. xxi. 6—9.

The serpent forms an object of frequent mention and interest in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation. The manner in which it is introduced in the early part of Divine Revelation, concerning the fall of man, is well known. It occurs also in the Book of Revelation. There we read of the devil and Satan, the “Old Serpent, that deceiveth the whole world.” There are eleven different kinds of serpents mentioned in the Word, all having their distinct significations, corresponding to the qualities and habits of the serpents named.

In all ancient writings almost, and in the hieroglyphics of Egypt, the serpent is very often used, and evidently with a symbolic meaning.

In nature, we know, serpents are very numerous, and of many kinds. There are those which produce their young alive, represented by our viper, and these are generally poisonous; and those which bring forth eggs, which are many of them harmless. There are small serpents, and large serpents, water serpents, and land serpents, tree serpents, and grass serpents, some that burrow in the sand, and some that fly in the air. There are serpents that go with a regular pace in their movements, and others that dart, and jerk, and spring as they pass along, or as they attack the objects of their prey.

Our Lord speaks in the Gospel of giving us power to tread upon serpents, to lift up serpents, and He denounces wicked

people as serpents who are in danger of the severest consummation of their wickedness.

The serpent has often been worshiped, and there are portions of India at present where the serpent is regarded as an object of veneration and esteem. From all these considerations we may conclude that the serpent is representative of something extremely common, something, indeed, affecting in one or other of its varieties every portion of mankind, and descriptive of some characteristic of every human being.

By bearing in mind its general feature, and that, indeed, from which its name (serpent from serps, to creep) is derived, we may fairly conclude that it represents the sensual degree of our minds, that part of us which creeps as it were near the earth, which is constantly concerned in observing the appearances and outsides of things. The centre of this degree of the soul is self-love, the I in the soul. As it predominates, the serpent in us prevails; as it is subdued, the angel part in us prevails.

Eternal things depend upon a right or a wrong condition of this part of the soul. The influences of heaven, and the influences of the lower world meet in this degree of the soul, and if we conquer self we become truly angelic men, if we are overcome by self we become human serpents. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself," said the Lord.

This is the very essence of all religion. Without this is done, in reality, nothing is done. Self and knowledge make not only a knowing, but a vain, fretful, querulous, and ostentatious person. Self and ignorance make a headstrong and obstinate clown.

Self and philosophy make a proud, distant, cold and exacting mind. Self and religious views make a pretentious, sanctimonious character, keen and crafty, but disguised by a dress of pious profession and outside attention to the means of religion, with an utter destitution of its heart, its justice, and its charity.

Against such combinations the Apostle turned when he said, "If I have all knowledge and all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing." The reason why the serpent forms so frequent an object named in the Divine Word is, the essential position the principle it symbolizes holds in the human character. It is the master passion. Virtue comes from subduing it; vice from allowing it to rule. All the different kinds of evil are but the varieties which lawless self-love assumes, or the subordinate results to which it gives rise.

All stealing, and all unjust appropriation of another's property, arise from self in the dishonest person seeking its objects

without the least concern for the rights or well-being of the persons plundered. The violences of fretfulness, impatience, and passion, even murder itself come from self excited to the extent of total disregard of the feelings, rights, and life even of another. All disregard of the Sabbath, of reverence for divine things, and the denial of the existence of God Himself, comes from the persistent efforts of self, dreading, disliking, repelling all interference with its self-seeking schemes and efforts, and when it has buried itself in its own darkness, it vainly imagines that it has shrouded itself from the divine eye, and at length it has proved "there is no God." As well might the mole declare in its own dark burrow, that it had proved there is no sun. "The fool hath said in his heart, no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works."—Ps. xv. i.

Self hatches all manner of subterfuges and lies, from the ready falsehood of the small habitual knave, to those contrivers of grand schemes of deceptive theology not according to the Divine Word, but according to ancient or modern Phariseeism, which make "the commandments of God of none effect." They make all religion to consist in the tremendous self-delusion, that we can claim all our Saviour's merit, not an atom of which belongs to us; and shift upon the Redeemer all our monstrous sins, not an atom of which belongs to Him. Life is nothing, love nothing, virtue nothing, character nothing, obedience nothing, only the belief any moment of what these people say, which they *call faith*. O self! self! self! what juggles are these thou playest with reason gifted man! "Thou hatchest the cockatrice' eggs, and weave thou the spider's web: he that eateth of the eggs dieth, and that which is crushed, breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments; neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands."—Isa. lix. 5, 6.

The Israelites, at the time to which our text relates, had with few exceptions become very restive, impatient, and unreasonable. They were approaching the end of the forty years abode in the wilderness, and had been protected by divine care all that time in the most wonderful manner. But there they were, complaining, murmuring, conspiring, defying, insolent against Moses and Aaron, at the least new trouble all wrong again, and worse than ever.

They had taken part with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They had had a temporary privation of water, and instead of trusting that He who gave them daily manna, would prevent them from

sinking for want of daily water, they chode with Moses and said, "Would God that we had died, when our brethren died before the Lord."—Num. xx. iii. Now, they were somewhat wearied with their journey, and they were first discouraged, and again the wild rebellious spirit broke out, and the people spake against God and against Moses. What a people was this! What was to be done with them? After all the unexampled mercies they had received, and were receiving, ready to burst out on the slightest privation into words and acts of pride and insolence.

As the symbols of their states, the Lord sent Fiery Serpents among the people, which bit their bodies, "and much people of Israel died."

This seemed a severe punishment, but it was nothing to what they were inflicting upon their own souls. Their selfishness was raging and insolent, destroying in their immortal part, all that was good and true. They were full of fiery flying serpents indeed. They were spiritually dying from deadly bites within. And what would it profit a man if he gained the whole world, and lost his own soul?

We often experience these fiery flying serpents now. When bitter passion is excited, and a person goes about venting rage on all sides, keen, flaming, insolent, what do we see but a fiery flying serpent? "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."—Ps. cxl. 1—3. "Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear: which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely."—lviii. 4, 5. "Out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent." Out of self-love, the serpent's root, come forth selfish schemes, the cockatrice; and these, when opposed, are full of animosity, rage, and destructive violence; the fruits are fiery flying serpents.

They are said to be sent by the Lord; not that anything evil ever comes directly from Him, for His tender mercies are over all His works, and His mercy endureth for ever; but because His laws in the universe are such that evil and punishment must go together. To accomplish the highest good for all, He must permit evil to bring its punishment. The Hebrews referred all things to God, without defining whether it was in the way of permission or of ordination.

Thus He was said to send plagues, as in the case of the death of the first-born of Egypt, although in reality it was the destroying spirits of the kingdom of darkness, who inflicted death.—Ex. xii. 23. ; Rev. ix. 11.

When a stormy and violent spirit has exhausted itself, and possibly even inflicted severe injury on its nervous system by passion ; when suffering pain, it supposes it is punished by the Divine Being, but it is really punished by itself, and by the evil spirits associated with it.

The Lord, our Heavenly Father and Saviour, is so good, so pure, so merciful, so altogether Love and Wisdom in Divine Human Form, that His hand is ever golden, His touch is ever the touch of infinite gentleness. “The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.” “The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.” “Bless the Lord all his works, in all places of his dominion : bless the Lord O my soul.” “He is the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.” His divine influx, flowing into creation, clothes itself in beauty and brightness.

But, besides the Lord and His kingdom, which operate for blessing in all the myriad forms of order, loveliness, and good, to train man and to bless him, there is in the spiritual world, as there is in the natural world, the kingdom of malignity, darkness, and disorder. This kingdom, with the dreadful spirits which belong to it, press round man, and would fain inject into him and into the world their horrid, hateful, poisonous life. Hence come diseases of various kinds, hence blindness, and delusion. Hence, vile essences filled the matter capable of being animated by impure life, and hideous monsters were formed at first, and are continued still in being. The hells overflow with horrid, disgusting, dreadful forms, and these embody themselves in disorderly substances in nature. John saw the bottomless pit send out a smoke, and there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.—Rev. ix. 3. So come tigers, venomous reptiles, and poisonous plants. It is not the pure life of God which is directly embodied in such destructive and hideous forms, but God's life perverted, by passing through infernal natures, and infernal spheres. It is true, God's life is the origin of all things, but of all things according to order.

When, then, it is said that the Lord sent the Fiery Serpents, we must understand that when the people were selfishly violent, and their souls were filled with malignant tempers, they became

leagued with infernal societies, and all around them swarmed infernal life, and this in accordance with the Divine laws of order.

The same thing takes place now, but mentally. Let a person come into a selfish and wrathful state, and fiendish spirits of darkness gather round, filling his mental atmosphere with the hisses of hate, and he feels as if his very hair, like the curls of Medusa, were all snakes.

This is said to be from the Lord, because it is in accordance with His laws. But the real immediate causes are from evil, and from hell. All light is from the Sun, but the colour it is in any room depends upon the kind of glass it shines through.

That which takes place now, mentally, took place among the Jews naturally; for it was the character of that outward dispensation that its blessings were realized in outward plenty and beauty of every kind, when the people were obedient; and when they were disobedient, outward calamities befel them, wild beasts harassed them, blights fell upon their crops, different kinds of caterpillars ate them up. They had a shadow of good things to come, and also of evil things.

Here, then, it is said that serpents, called from the inflammatory nature of their bite the Fiery Serpents, came upon them, and bit them, so that many died. They were the embodiment of the infernal spheres into which the Israelites had cast themselves, and only from the Lord, because the laws of the universe are from Him, and the life that creates all things is His.

The people were appalled. We, too, should have been terrified at so peculiar and tremendous a plague.

There is a parallel to it with ourselves, when we suffer our minds to lie transported with rage and vexation, and chafe and gnaw ourselves until we lose all the life of love and virtue, and many of Israel die. Let us beware of this dread calamity. Let us seek the gentle influences of heavenly charity every day, and when the asp or the cockatrice shall stir in their dens, let the gentle powers of faith and love put them down and realize the beautiful words, "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den, and none shall hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

When the people saw the calamity they had brought upon themselves, they were filled with terror, and humbled themselves. "They came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee: pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people."

Moses was directed to make an image of the Serpent, "and he made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." This Serpent was the symbol of the sensuous part of the Humanity of our Lord, and looking at it represented faith in Him. Our Lord Himself taught this, for He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John iii. 14, 15.

The Brazen Serpent being the means of deliverance and of safety, represented the Lord's taking our nature, coming down to the life of our senses. Moses made this serpent to represent that the Word became flesh: the Divine Wisdom clothed itself in outer nature, and lived down into the senses. But the serpent was lifted up. Literally, on the cross; spiritually, by glorification the Son of Man was lifted up. He is now lifted up, so that He is Divinely Human. In Him, God is Man and Man is God. The Divinity in the Humanity fills heaven, and rules earth and hell. All power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth. He has the keys of hell and of death. The saving Serpent was made of brass (strictly copper), because that metal signifies natural good, or good in the lowest degree of the mind.

The feet of brass, like the Serpent of brass, represent the Divine Goodness in the Lord's natural mind in His Glorified Humanity.

This Divine manifested itself in His condescending care for His peoples wants in the days of His sojourn on earth. How tender He was with the sorrowing. How kindly He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the lame, forgiveness to the erring, lessons of mercy and love to all.

He stooped to become a man that He might reach us, and that we might reach Him. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Thus the spiritually serpent-bitten could look upon Him and live.

Among men there was neither an example of true unselfishness, nor had they power to attain it. Then was the reign of the serpents, then mankind were bitten by them in all directions, many of Israel dying.

But the serpent bruiser was at hand. The love of God, manifested in a Divine Human Life, presented a life that all could see; and all, in whom heaven had yet any representative of admiration for goodness or reverence for truth, could be drawn to Him, who lived for them a life of constant self-sacrifice and

perfect truth ; who died for them a death of self-sacrifice ; and who rose again for them triumphant over death and hell.

He took our very nature, even our serpent nature, debased in the likeness of sinful flesh, for the Lord caused to meet in Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. liii. 6), that He might be tempted in all points, even as we are tempted, that He might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.—Heb. iv. 15. But in Himself first He bruised the serpent's head, and then with the fan of omnipotence in His hand He thoroughly purged the world of mind ; He broke open the prison-houses of men's souls, burst their bonds and set them free ; then glorified the nature he had assumed, and made it perfect. He made the Serpent in Himself a brazen-serpent ; that is, filled it with Divine Human Goodness, and raised it up for the passion-bitten, lust-tormented souls of the universe to look upon and live, or in other words, to trust in and love.

Its position implied that the sufferers must look up. The soul must turn from self to the Saviour, from earth to heaven. It was as the Redeemer said, "and I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me."

The tossed and the torn in heart, the wearied and the humbled who feel that they are dying if no help come, must from their very hearts look up. A glorious sight is before them. One full of goodness is exalted to be their Prince and Saviour. "Look unto me," He says, "all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." He is the all-glorious object of faith. He has made it possible for souls to turn to Him, and now He will heal and bless the sufferers. They will not only behold, but live. And they who live and believe in Him shall never die.

With what exulting life, what bounding joy would the serpent-bitten, find the poison neutralized, health restored, and the terrible danger gone. The earth would glisten in a new light. Fear and dread would give place to gratitude and love. Everything would smile upon them, for they were now freed, saved, and happy. So is it with the sin delivered spirit wherever found. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new."

SERMON LI.

BALAAM AND HIS ASS.

“And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.”—Num. xxii. 32, 33.

It is hard to realize that famous saying of the apostle Paul, “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.” Yet it is undoubtedly true.

To be a prophet is a great gift, but to be a loving, kindly, faithful servant of the Lord is by far a greater. This truth is exemplified in the history of the prophet Balaam, whose intellect was divinely bright, but whose heart was sordid, corrupt, mean, and low. The divine history which brings him before us is interesting and important in several respects, but particularly in two. It presents us with many remnants of an earlier Church, which had prevailed in Canaan and the surrounding countries; and whose lights though generally corrupted and debased, yet still existed with a few. And, secondly, it presents Israel, after the discipline of forty years, now ready to enter the promised land, trained to the beautiful order indicated by Balaam. “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. As the valleys they are spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side.”

There was a church, meant in the Scriptures by the allegory of Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, which had been spread far and wide over those eastern countries centuries before Moses was called to lead the Israelites from Egypt. The abominations of the Canaanites, and the idolatries of the surrounding lands were the truths of that church corrupted, prostituted, profaned, and turned to magical and diabolical purposes.

Baal was an emblem of the sun, and sun-worship in its origin was the worship of the Lord, the sun of heaven.

The names of many places in Canaan imply a reference to former celebrity connected with religion. We read of Debir as one of the cities ; and as the name signifies the Word, it was probably the seat of heavenly teaching in days long gone by. In the chapter preceding the one from which our text is taken, we read of two books of a Bible before the present Bible, the Book of the Wars of the Lord, (ver. 14,) and the book of "them that speak in proverbs," or prophecies, (ver. 27), appellations that may perhaps remind us of our own twofold division of the law and the prophets ; and in the extracts from these books, many names occur which are used with a spiritual significance. Balaam, and the king of Moab, both seem familiar with the names of the Lord, and with the capability of having the spiritual sight opened. The order also to have seven altars built for worship, and seven oxen and seven rams for sacrifice, can scarcely fail to strike us as implying some knowledge of the sacred symbolism of numbers.

These various considerations all seem to indicate the fact, that in remote times the Church had existed in Syria, as there is reason to believe it had in many other eastern countries, and that the superstitions, and gross worship of beastly sacrifices, which yet have a certain relation to the truth, were but the carnal perversion of what had been in ages then remote, the bright lessons of a purer, better faith.

Balaam was one in whom the knowledge and the better faith still continued, with the gifts of spiritual intercourse and prophecy added ; but, alas, with a total neglect of that regeneration of the heart which is man's indispensable duty upon earth. He knew the right, but he loved the wrong.

The description Balaam gives of himself is very majestic and strangely solemn and affecting. "Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said : he hath said who heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, who saw the vision of the Almighty, bowing down, but having his eyes open."

Balaam was an inhabitant of Pethor, a small city of Mesopotamia, on the river Euphrates, and we may infer that the decay of true religion had not been so complete in that region of the east, as in Canaan and the surrounding countries. The intensity of the alarm felt by the Moabites and the Midianites may be concluded from their having sent so far, not less than

four hundred miles, for one whom they believed powerful to bless and to curse, and friendly to them.

But, let us consider the subject a little more deeply in its spiritual and universal character. The scene of the transaction was the land of Moab. Balak was the king of Moab. Balaam was the distant prophet called upon to save the Moabites from impending danger and defeat. The Moabites were a people that originated in a dark and lawless way from Lot, the cousin of Abraham, and generally they were in opposition to Israel. They inhabited the country outside of the Dead Sea, about fifty miles long and fifty miles broad. In their best states they were tributaries to the Israelites.

As the Israelites were the representatives by divine appointment of a true spiritual Church, so it would follow that the countries surrounding the land of Canaan, according to their relation to, and connexion with the Israelites, must have their representation also. The Moabites are obviously so regarded in the Word of God.

There are people in every land who separate worship from life. They are ready to worship, they are even pious in their habits, and punctilious in their attendance upon the services of religion, but have no concern about purity of heart, and very little about uprightness of life. Their piety has no relation to justice, and very little to charity. They have no religious principles, they have only practices. They will readily yield an outward observance to public prayer, and be indignant at those who neglect church, but they regard worship not as a means of making them true and pure, just and good, but as a tax due to the Almighty, dangerous and wrong to neglect. They will crowd to church, but lay no control upon their passions. They will mix solemnly in public worship, but the moment any one offends them they will indulge in words fearful to hear. They will continue in their orgies until Saturday night, but appear with devout face on Sunday morning. They know nothing and care nothing about justice to men being a duty to God. They are strange mixtures of sin and superstition, religion without, and lust within. They have an instinctive aversion to inward religion. They abhor downright sincerity in heart and thought. They shrink from thinking on religious subjects. They avoid the themes of death and eternity as painful spectres to be kept from sight as much as possible. They are not without some virtues, are often characters that deceive themselves as to their true nature, and win the admiration and esteem of the superficial,

but with painful impurities that grow with age, and curse many a home at length with a bad husband or wife, and a reckless father or mother. Such men surprise the world often with frauds and bankruptcies which astonish and appal men who saw the fair outside, and the religious demeanour, but never knew how little of true and living religious thought there was, and how much of self-indulgence. These persons are the spiritual Moabites. Their aim to preserve themselves unchanged on the approach of the spiritual Israelites is represented in the history before us, by the efforts of Balak, king of Moab, and the temptation of Balaam to curse, and, if possible, ruin Israel.

The true spiritual Moabite is described in those remarkable words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed."—Jer. xlviii. 11.

How truly is described in these expressive terms, religion without regeneration. The states of those who have been at ease from their youth, and pampered the natural man, attending to religious service in its turn with the other customs of life, as the proper thing to do, but never enquiring into the truth or falsehood of what is offered to them, never enquiring into themselves, never testing their inclinations by the laws of truth and goodness, and warring against such as are wrong. Settled on their lees, such minds dread and abhor change, reformation, and progress. They cling to the habits of their Church and country, however pernicious. "Their taste remains, and their scent is not changed."

It never occurs to the true Moabite that religious worship is a means, and not an end; a means to make us wise, humble, unselfish, and good; its very essence is change and purification. The man who is not changed, is no wiser than he was last year, no better than he used to be. He is not born again. He has not struggled with his selfishness in temper. He has not hurled his inward idols from their thrones, especially the demon self. He has not come into the captivity of temptation, and been emptied from vessel to vessel. With such a thin covering as custom, or fashion, or natural amiability gives, he is capricious, self-willed, violent, and impure, as his unchanged temperament makes him, and his religious service does him harm rather than good, as it soothes his conscience with the sad opiate that it compensates in the light of God for his shortcomings, and even his vileness in every other respect.

Most of the great persecutors of others have been lax in their lives, or gloomy and bitter in their tempers, but strict in their superstition. Such is the mental Moabite. The land of the Moabites was near to Canaan, but the Dead Sea was between them. The Moabite state is one that has some near resemblance to true religion, but between them is a whole Dead Sea of superstitious thought. It is not unlovely in appearance, but powerless against many sins, and in times of excitement, against many wild delusions. "The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. All ye that are about him bemoan him, and all ye that know his name say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod."—Jer. xlviii. 16, 17.

But, inside that outward form of mere devotion, "We have heard the pride of Moab, he is exceeding proud, his loftiness, his arrogancy, his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart."—ver. 29. And the time assuredly comes at last when those terrible words are fulfilled on all who remain in that unhappy state of ritual religion, without internal truth and love, virtue, and obedience, "Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the Lord. He that fleeth from the fear, shall fall into the pit: and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare; for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the Lord."—ver. 42—44.

The elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian come with rewards of divination in their hand. The rewards of regeneration are wisdom, purity, love, heavenly-mindedness, heavenly joy, and heavenly peace. The rewards of divination are delirium, infatuation, the applause of the foolish, the vain, and the bad, and it may be earthly pomp and power, the hollow gewgaws of time and sense.

We have here represented, the next step in the declension of a sinking soul. He will go on the wrong side, but he thinks he will do right there. The words spoken and ascribed to God, portray the permission of the Divine Providence to one whose ruling love is bent on doing wrong, a permission not of goodwill, but of necessary condescension for wise ends, and therefore it is immediately added, "God's anger was kindled because he went."—ver. 22.

Man's sense of pain, when he is opposing the divine laws, is called the anger of God. God is never angry in himself, but He seems angry to the soul which has opposed itself to His goodness and wisdom.

Balaam saddled his Ass and went with the princes of Moab. But the angel of the Lord stood as an adversary in his way, with a sword drawn in his hand.—ver. 22, 23.

No doubt, these incidents occurred to Balaam just as they are related, but we must never forget that the Divine Record contains them, that every circumstance may convey to us a part of the spiritual lesson.

The ass, like the horse, has its correspondence in divine things. The horse corresponds to the INTELLECT, which carries its rider on the path of spiritual truth; hence Judah is said to be the Lord's goodly horse in the battle, (Zech. x. 2); and He who rode on the white horse went forth conquering and to conquer.—Rev. vi. 1. The ass corresponds to the intellect in relation to natural truth. Thus it corresponds to a lower faculty of the same class, as that of which the horse is the symbol.

The horse corresponds to spiritual good sense, and the ass to natural good sense.

Issachar is said to be a strong ass, couching between two burdens.—Gen. xlix. 14. In the original language of the Scriptures, it is said of Ishmael, "He shall be a wild-ass man."—Gen. xvi. 12. Israel in disobedience is called a wild-ass alone by himself.—Hosea viii. 9. And it was not without a meaning that the Lord rode on an ass to Jerusalem, but to teach us that our good sense on all earthly subjects should ever be subordinate to those sacred principles which form the Church, and govern our eternal interest. The ass should be guided by the Saviour to Jerusalem.

Balaam saddling his Ass was a symbol, in spiritual things, of a person arranging his mind: setting himself in order to accomplish the purpose he had in view, that of uniting himself to Moab.

Before proceeding in our consideration of the narrative, it may be well to observe that Balaam was a seer, or one as he himself several times declares, "who saw visions of the Almighty, having his eyes open," that is, his spiritual eyes. Now, with such a one, there is often such a blending of the perception of the spiritual, with the natural, that as the apostle Paul expresses it, whether he is in the body or out of the body he cannot tell.—2 Cor. xii. 2. So whether an object is in the natural world, or in the spiritual world, as far as sight goes, he cannot tell.

Whenever an angel is seen, we may be assured that it is with spiritual eyes, for natural eyes can only see natural objects, and spiritual eyes can only see spiritual objects. So when Balaam

saw the angel, Divine Providence had uncovered his spiritual sight, and he then beheld the objects of the spiritual world.

We must not forget also that each animal has its spiritual form, which is the soul of its natural form. It has not the spiritual and celestial degrees of the soul, nor that internal which links man to God, as a human being has, and therefore has neither the principles nor the capacity of immortal life, yet it has that lower degree of mind in which the animal appetites reside, and which can be seen in the spiritual world, and if granted, can see there. Hence, animals have a limited species of thought, a mental sympathy with man, and frequently appear to dream. In the sacred narrative, the Ass is said to have seen the angel before the prophet did so, and we can hardly regard this as difficult to be conceived. In the other life, the forms of animals constantly appear, corresponding to the ideas and sentiments which are the subjects of the thoughts of the angels near whom they are. And while they remain, they seem in all respects like animals on earth. They are, in fact, the spiritual forms which, when clothed with matter, become animals on the earth.

Literally, then, an animal has the capacity of perceiving a spiritual being, if permitted of the Divine Providence, and the text assures us the Ass saw the angel three times.

The way of Balaam corresponded to the false and evil course he was taking. The action of the Ass corresponded to the dictates of common sense. Going into the field corresponds to the mind investigating whether this downward course will conduce to goodness in life. It is expressive of the activity of conscience, suggesting that a harvest of virtues must undoubtedly be reaped for the soul to be right, and a Moabite condition will not conduce to that end. Notwithstanding this warning, Balaam persevered, and compelled the Ass to go on until he came to a path of the vineyards having a wall on this side and on that side, and there the angel stood again. The Ass was once more unwilling to go, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall.

The path among the vineyards, and the two walls would correspond to his course in relation to faith. Wall corresponds to doctrine, and two walls to the doctrines of faith and charity. The crushing of the foot would represent the condemnation of the conduct he was pursuing. Still he did violence to the Ass, and compelled it to go forwards. The angel of the Lord appeared again where there was no possibility of passing, and the Ass fell down. Balaam was enraged, smote the Ass, and longed for the power to destroy it.

Let us remember the symbolic character of the ass, and then see how graphic is the portraiture of the downward course of a man interiorly bad, but as yet with much of truth in the intellect. His common sense sees the laws of heaven opposing him, and remonstrates with him, but is overborne. His love of evil urges him on, blind to consequences. As he proceeds, his sense of right brings the considerations of religion upon him, hedges him in and condemns him. Rage makes him violent. His natural sense of right entirely fails him, his ass falls down. His madness urges him on to destroy everything that stands in his way, yet he cannot readily do this. A remonstrance comes home to him that reason is right, and has served him during his life upwards, and would serve him still, but he has opposed himself to heaven, the sword of truth is across his path.

The voice from the Ass was an appearance for the sake of the correspondence, like the voice from the clouds in the spiritual scenes of the New Testament. The Ass had no rational thought from which speech comes, but Divine Providence can make a voice come to the sinning Prophet, that would symbolize the voice of reason which speaks potently to all of us ere we finally break it down. And then the mental veil was taken from the spiritual eyes of the erring one, and he saw heaven's messenger before him, sword in hand. He shuddered, fell down, and acknowledged he had sinned.

He was stayed in his career, warned, and directed, but not cured. He was brought into the state of mind that would prevent him from doing evil on this journey, or from cursing Israel. He was made to bless the people of the Lord.

But alas! what pains men take to curse themselves! With wondrous gifts, with power of admiring right, and longing for the death of the righteous, (chap. xxiii. 10); yet his way was perverse, and he leagued himself with Moab and Midian, perfidiously, corruptly, to ensnare and destroy all that was weak in Israel, and so destroyed himself, thus becoming a shame and a warning to all future generations—Rev. ii. 14.

Preserve us, O Divine Saviour, from tampering with right. Bless us, Lord Jesus, with a single heart and a single eye, so that we may love thee, and love thy people, and so have Thee abiding with us until we come at last to the peace of thy kingdom.

SERMON LII.

MOSES APPOINTING JOSHUA HIS SUCCESSOR.

“And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”—Deut. xxxi., 7, 8.

The scenes associated with the closing life of Moses, as described in the divine history, are singularly sublime and impressive.

By the training and vicissitudes of forty years in the Arabian desert, under the divine direction, they had attained order, discipline, and confidence. One generation had passed. A young host familiar with divine protection had taken the place of the fearful multitude which had quitted Egypt, demoralized in the house of bondage. Emboldened by many a victory, by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire at their head, they would be elated also by their approach to the promised land, by the fertile country, and the glorious mountains of Moab. Arranged in admirable order, marshalled under their organized leaders, as they left the rude wild pastures of the desert, and came into the fair plains on which they stood, we can well imagine their imposing majesty. The neighbouring nations trembled, yet Israel only repelled assailants. They encamped like a lion at rest, and felt that the Lord their God was with them, and the shout of a king was amongst them.

Moses, their aged leader was yet at their head, one hundred and twenty years old, but he was about to quit them. Before their assembled hosts, with their elders and priests about him, he recounted the chief points in their history, in which he and their fathers and themselves had been actors, gave them the most solemn advice, and appointed his successor to lead them when he was no more with them.

He gave Joshua himself a charge in the sight of all Israel, and in the terms of our text. Perhaps there has been no scene in all

history more impressive and sublime, than that scene on the plain of Moab, with Pisgah, Nebo, Abarim before them, and Jordan in the distance, and the aged Moses at the head of his rescued people, giving them his dying charge. It was a great thing for them. It was a lesson to endure for ages. It is a great thing for us. It may afford us lessons to endure for ever. Let us contemplate our lessons.

The law in all things was a shadow of good things to come.

The two leaders of the natural Israel, Moses and Joshua, were the symbols of the two leaders of the spiritual Israel, the letter and the spirit, outward religion and inward religion, law and love. We are led out of Egypt by Moses; we are led into Canaan by Joshua.

“The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” Jesus Himself leads us in rooting out the evils of the heart, and giving us the peace that passes all understanding. Joshua is the Hebrew for Jesus.

Moses, then, represents the Word while it is an external force reforming us: Joshua represents the Word in its spirit and life regenerating us. The one brings us to Canaan, the other takes us in. Moses fights with and subdues our outward sins. Joshua conquers and removes our inward lusts.

Moses had led and disciplined the hosts of Israel, and been the means of overcoming every foe that had endangered the people in Egypt and the country outside of but approaching to Canaan. The law held in sincerity and fear will conquer our outward sins for us. “The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.” “Let them hear Moses and the prophets,” said our Lord, “if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

When led and strengthened by the Word, even in its letter, the soul can be led out of its Egypt, can be made free from its outer sins, and be blessed by a freedom such as it never knew before. “If the truth shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” “Fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then 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. 17—20.

The Word gives light to discern our sins; it warns, it animates, it cheers, it consoles, it directs, it trains, it feeds the soul with manna to strengthen it. The Word thus far, and in this

respect, is our Moses. Even the gospel, while it is understood and accepted in the letter only, is a Moses. The Lord with us teaches and trains us, but the Lord in us is the hope of glory. The Lord is indeed our All in all. But when He is in our memory and our intellect, He is Moses. When He is victorious in the heart, He is Joshua. He never leaves us, but when as Moses He is about to disappear, He gives the inspiriting charge to Joshua which we find in the words of our text. Joshua had been with Moses all the time of the Israelitish pilgrimage, but in a subordinate position. The spirit of the Word is with the letter always, though in the earlier movements of our spiritual life, little seen ; but later it comes up to view, and takes the leadership : the earthly dies, and the spiritual rises.

Let us notice, especially, the animating words addressed to Joshua on his taking the leadership. They impress us like the sound of a trumpet. "Be strong and of good courage. The Lord, he it is that doth go before thee, He will be with thee. He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee : fear not, neither be dismayed."

Literally, the cheering tones of this charge were intended to fortify Israel and the new leader, in view of the multiplied dangers which they would soon have to face. There were seven nations to root out, gigantic foes to encounter and subdue. The Amorites of the mountains entrenched in their strongholds ; the Canaanites of the plains and valleys, with numerous chariots and trained hosts of footmen. Both Moses and Joshua were aware of the severe difficulties to be encountered, but there was no disposition to flinch or fail in their work, but only to fortify themselves to be faithful and true. They knew the Lord was with them, and that was enough. They never dreamt of substituting believing for doing. They went right before them, saying, "The Lord he it is that doth go before thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee : fear not, neither be dismayed." It is one of the saddest signs of the present day, that among Christians, there is so strong a disposition to avoid the work of interior regeneration. There is a spiritual cowardice which is deeply to be lamented, as it leads to the work of the Lord being done deceitfully, and it brings dishonour on Him who is the Mighty God. From all sides one hears the craven sound,—you cannot keep the commandments ; you cannot become pure in heart ; your work is not to root out your bosom sins ; you are not to strive against evil tempers, evil lusts and evil passions ; you are not to do ANYTHING, but believe that Christ has done everything for you.

Not so was it Moses encouraged Joshua. "Thou must go with this people unto the land," he said, "which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them ; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it."

Heaven is to be won within : the kingdom of God is within the regenerate. But, where the kingdom of God is to be, unnumbered foes as yet have their abodes and strongholds. Our enemies are mighty and numerous, on the mountains and in the plains. They have great cities, and many entrenchments. There are many of them giants in size. But what then ? Shall we fear them, or fail in our life's work ? Oh no. Rather let us make these divine words our spiritual battle cry, "Be strong and of good courage : for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn to their fathers to give them, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it." Courage is something unspeakably noble. In both sacred and secular history, wherever we see dauntless courage displayed, our own hearts warm with admiration. To true courage, of warm heart and clear mind, success is already half won. Giants become dwarfs before courage, difficulties die away ; while to the timid every molehill becomes a mountain.

What grand achievements have been due to courage in every age ! When we read the story of David, and hear him relate how he, the shepherd boy, had seized and slain the lion and the bear, and felt that the uncircumcized giant that had defied the armies of the living God would be as one of them, we feel that it is sublime, and victory is already sure. So with Saul's valiant son, the noble Jonathan, he was fearless against the hosts of Philistia, and they fled before him. In every age, on land and sea, courage has worked its marvels, and saved nations or planted new ones ; for it is not the wonder-worker in deeds of battle only. Columbus sailing for weeks and months over an unexplored ocean presents a dauntless figure. The engineer who throws a road over a morass from which the timid shrink, or builds a light-house amidst stormy waves ; the reformer, the Luther, who attacks abuses acquiesced in by millions, and entrenched in respectability ; the noble soul which labours to overcome ignorance, dirt, and crime, undismayed by their extent, are all heroes ; and the groundwork of all heroism is courage.

Joshua had been remarkable for his courage throughout his history. He had seen with his fellow-explorers of Canaan all the dangers from which they shrunk, when they scattered dismay throughout the host with their dismal stories of giants to whom

they were as grasshoppers ; but when he saw the panic spread, and the trembling multitude ready to rush back to Egypt in despair, he rent his clothes with sacred indignation. He cried out with fearless bravery, and saved Israel in spite of themselves, while all the congregation were threatening to stone him and Caleb, "If the Lord delight in us he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord ; neither fear ye the people of the land ; for they are bread for us ; their defence is departed from them ; and the Lord is with us ; fear them not."

To him then it was, and to us through him that Moses addressed the spirit-stirring words of our text, "Be strong and of good courage." The Divine Spirit of religion is always this, when it enters into the interior of the soul. Joshua went forth with fearless bravery, and all obstacles fell before him.

And in our spiritual warfare shall it not be so with us ? How unworthy is the spirit we too often hear in the pulpit even, and is still oftener found in the craven words of half-hearted souls. We cannot overcome our faults and sins of various kinds, we have tried and failed again and again ; we must be saved some other way. Will it not do if we pray for mercy at the last ? If we believe in Christ, cannot we go to heaven by substitution ?

It is mercy that is leading us to overcome the hell within. We do not believe in the Lord Jesus while we shrink from the work he gives us to do. He is the source of all true heroism. He conquered all the powers of darkness as the Divine Joshua, and He repeats these words to each of us, "Be strong and of good courage." Have faith in Me. "I give you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Do the work of repentance and regeneration, and I will ever be with you. He saves His people from their sins by giving them power to root them out ; but only to men of good courage. The fearful and unbelieving ever fail, and remain outside of the holy city.—Rev. xxi. 8. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." "I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

In the charges to Joshua, there are three things presented as bases for the invincible courage to which he was exhorted, and which are essential things to us. First, "Thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give it to them : and thou shalt cause them to inherit it." Secondly, "The Lord he it is that doth go before thee : He will be with thee." And, thirdly, it was additionally

said to Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth : but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein : for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."—Joshua i. 8.

In considering the spiritual lesson presented in the leadership of Joshua, as representing the power of the interior life of the Lord Jesus in the soul, we must notice the first division as the groundwork of all the rest. "Thou must go with this people unto the land." The truth taught here was declared by our Lord Himself, and to the thoughtful mind is self-evident. "Ye must be born again." There must be inner conquest, and a new heart. **MUST.** Without it, there is no happiness on earth or in heaven. A bad temper must be overcome. A sordid disposition must be subdued. An unjust over-reaching spirit must be expelled. Self and all its offshoots—pride, vanity, self-will, obstinacy, contempt of others, and all the unchaste lusts of the soul must be rooted out, as the Lord shews them to us. We must tread on the lion and the asp, the young lion and the dragon within, or we can never have peace, never see peace.

Let us consider what the unregenerate heart is according to the divine description. "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."

Can we look at this sad list of vicious things which exist in germ in the heart, and not feel the solemnity of the divine words of our text? "Thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord sware unto their fathers to give them."

Canaan with the sensual, corrupt, and horrid nations that possessed it, was exactly the type of the unregenerate heart. The heart gives character to the whole man. If this Augean stable is uncleansed it will pollute and break down all the faculties of the soul, and after defiling, enflaming, and degrading the entire man, the end will be insanity in some of its forms. But if the Spirit of the Lord Jesus enters, leading in a whole army of better principles, like Joshua and his host, then indeed new health comes in with every sin expelled. Tract after tract is won. Giant after giant—passion falls before the power of truth and love. Canaan becomes a little heaven. The heart, transformed like the land, realizes the description given in another place. "A land of hills and valleys, drinketh water of the rain of heaven. A land

which the Lord thy God careth for : the eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."—Deut. xi. 11, 12. The selfish arid heart gives place to holy, pure, and generous sentiments, and loving actions. "The wilderness blooms like Eden, and the desert like the garden of God." There is a heaven within, and so there is a heaven around. "Old things have passed away : all things have become new."

This work of making the heart anew, and rejecting the evils which so readily beset us, is what all feel to be the one thing needful, but there is great disbelief in the power of accomplishing it. Many sincere souls sorrow over inward sin, but are faint-hearted as to their power of its entire removal. Hence, the necessity of never forgetting the second assurance we have in the charge to Joshua. "The Lord, he it is that doth go before thee : he will be with thee." It is said, the Lord will go before thee, meaning the Divine Love has prepared everything for this great end, that the soul may become like heaven. He has arranged all things, from the first dawn of our being, that we shall become angels. He has implanted remains of good within us. He has stored up truths in our minds. He is wonderfully working in the secret recesses of our being, that all things may work together for our good. He goes before us. And, then, the power that is working in His truth, in all its promises, and in all it forbids, however harsh it may sometimes seem, is still Divine Love, and Omnipotent Love. "He will be with thee." Our own power is small enough, but His power is Almighty. If we lean upon it in loving faith, there is nothing can stand against us. The influences of the dark world know their master, and at His voice their most awful rage is stilled. "The Lord sitteth upon the floods : the Lord sitteth king for ever. Trust in Him, remember He is with thee, and cannot fail ; and then no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord."—Isa. liv. 17.

The third sure warrant for victory to Joshua, and to us, is the study of the Word, and obedience to it. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth : but thou shalt meditate therein day and night : that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

To the Christian pilgrim the Word is the treasury of all he needs. It is his counsellor in every state. It is his meat and

drink; his light in darkness; and the brightest glory of his noblest hours. It is his sword, his helmet, his shield and breastplate. It is the lamp to his feet, and the light to his path. It contains mines for him of heavenly gold and silver. He, therefore, meditates therein, and is sustained and directed by it in every variety of his life. And thus his way becomes prosperous, and he has good success. There is no success so triumphant, and no prosperity so true as those which come from victories over self. These are attended by present peace, and heartfelt satisfaction, and such conquests last for ever.

Let us then say to every earnest soul, "Be strong and of good courage." Fear nothing. Only be resolute. Evil has no vested right, or vested wrong in you. The Lord has made you for heaven, and heaven for you. He has promised to your fathers to give you that land, and if you will be guided by His Word He will certainly cause you to inherit it.

Look at what needs to be done. Pray for light to see your evils, and by the Saviour's power and guidance to overcome them. "He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Fear not. Conquering them may be hard, but sparing them is harder. Fear not. Be courageous. What is sin that you should dread it. It has no right in creation. It is a disease, an excrescence, an anomaly in the world, an ulcer, a plague, an enormous expense, and worth less than nothing. The strength of sin is in our fear and follies. Be of good cheer. See how brave souls have dared in every age to encounter perils of the most terrible kinds for the welfare of man, and the glory of God. Look up to the Conqueror of all the powers of darkness combined, who is your Saviour, and resolve in His might to overcome. He will be with you. "Fear not, neither be dismayed." "He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Conquering sin you gain yourself, you gain a new heaven, and a new earth. You gain peace on earth, and everlasting blessedness among the good.

SERMON LIII.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF MOSES.

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."—Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.

The last chapter of Deuteronomy was certainly not written by Moses. The account among the Jews is, "That the seventy elders who are spoken of at different times as accompanying Moses and Aaron, formed a great sacred council to preserve the inspired records, and aid in the conduct of divine things in the establishment of the nation." To some hand, which they would regard as inspired, we owe probably this finishing chapter of Deuteronomy, which though obviously not written by Moses, since it contains the account of his death and burial, yet is undoubtedly inspired, for it contains the inner spirit and life which can be brought out by the divine law of correspondence, and which are the result and the proof of inspiration from the Lord. The human body is a divine work, proved by the surpassing wonders it contains, no matter who was its earthly parent. So the Divine Books prove their own inspiration, by the spiritual wisdom they contain in a series, no matter whether in part or in whole, some of them were written by authors different from those to whom they are ordinarily attributed. The Word is the Word of the Lord, and it is because it is inspired from Him that it is divine, not because of the dignity of the pen of the human authority to which it has been attributed, or whose name it bears.

The departure of Moses from the people, after the sublime blessing he pronounced over them as the last expressions of his love, must have been a solemn sight, and one most affecting to the people. Their eyes would follow their heroic, glorious, venerable leader as he ascended the side of Nebo, until his aged

form was no longer visible, as the eyes of children giving a long, last look after a vanishing parent. On Pisgah, Nebo's highest summit, he was to have a full view of the promised land, and then be removed to a still better country,—a lovelier, higher Canaan. He descended the mountain, but to die, and be buried by Divine Providence, in a sepulchre that no man knoweth even unto this day.

The children of Israel wept for Moses thirty days, and well they might. He had led them bravely, faithfully, gloriously, in storm and in triumph, for forty years. He was visibly the servant of God. His wonderful career had been a constant protection to them. He was the instrument of having raised them from being a multitude of slaves to be a nation, not only illustrious in its own annals, but the type of the Church of God in every age and in every land.

Moses had no fear of death; no sigh, no murmur escaped him. He knew that a better world was near, although unseen. He had heard a voice proclaiming, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and he felt that God was not "God of the dead, but of the living: for all live to him."—Luke xx. 37, 38. His life had been consecrated to God, and his departure to a higher life was an illustration of the Saviour's meaning in a still brighter, better time, which ought to be realized by every Christian. "He that liveth and believeth in ME shall NEVER die."—John xi. 25.

But now from the personal, let us ascend to the spiritual Moses. For here, as well as everywhere else, we must remember, "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Ps. xix. 7. The Death of Moses, equally with his life, is intended to portray the progress of the law of the Lord in the human soul.

Moses, we have often seen, was the symbol of the law given by him, and is thus used constantly in the Sacred Scriptures, especially in the New Testament. Those who hear the law are regarded as still hearing Moses. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," said our Lord, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." When the whole Word was represented, as testifying to Him as its soul and centre, in the wondrous scene of the transfiguration, Peter, James, and John saw Moses and Elias talking to Jesus. In heaven they sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb," because every song of angelic joy is expressive of obedience to precept, from a spirit of love to the Divine Lamb.

Religion must be felt first as a law, a law strict and severe, but

which must be obeyed, ere we can be delivered from our mental bondage, or spiritual Egypt. He who will not obey the law, will make no progress. "The law," said the Apostle, "is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."—Gal. iii. 24. And the law must be obeyed by self-denial, and a life of order. It has been said that he who has never been well-drilled to obedience, will never make a good ruler. A bad soldier will not make a good general. So is it in eternal things. We must first keep the commandments, and because they are divinely commanded. We must learn obedience. Our Lord said to the young man who came to Him and said, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? If thou wouldst enter into life keep the commandments." "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" And again, "They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life." "And ye, when ye have done all that ye have been commanded, say, We are unprofitable servants."

The reason why the Christianity of many is of so imperfect a character is, that believing in a gospel fact, has been substituted for believing in the laws, which must be obeyed. They want Canaan, but without being led by Moses. They adopt faith in the fancy of their teachers, instead of faith in the commandments of God. Yet the latter is the only safe, the only divine rule. "O that there were such a 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 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. 23, 24. "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. "Blessed are they that do his commandments."—Rev. xxii. 14. "Circumcision is nothing," said the apostle Paul, "and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God."—1 Cor. vii. 19. The law, and the prophets, the gospel and the apostles really all teach the same thing,—obedience to the divine commandments, as the first great step in true religion. The Divine Physician has laid down this regimen as the way to spiritual health, and it is the only way. He who will not learn to walk, will never be able to run.

When the commandments are a cross, it is an evidence to us

how much our nature has been contorted, and how difficult it is to get us right. But we must bear our cross resolutely, and follow the Lord, or we cannot be His disciples.—Luke xiv. 27.

There are those who represent Moses and the Gospel as opposites, the one proclaiming condemnation, and the other salvation. But it is not so; they are only the court and the temple of the same glorious edifice.

When we reject Moses, we reject the Lord who inspired him. The same Lord, even the Lord Jesus, who gave the New Testament, gave the Old. The essence is the same in both, but they differ in form, because applying to man in different stages of his mental career. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me," the Lord said, "for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"—John v. 46, 47. We must all believe Moses first; or, in other words, we must take religion as a law for our lives, as a leader to heavenly virtues, as a power to combat against our evils. We must follow it as something extraneous to ourselves, directing us to higher and holier states, speaking of the kingdom of God as yet far off, but in the direction in which we are now marching.

If we follow this Moses in the full assurance that God is speaking to us by him, we shall cross the Red Sea, and leave Pharaoh and his host, or our old evils, behind us. We shall sing our song of triumph. We shall march on and find perils, but also succours; struggles, but also victories; threatened famine, but also manna for supply; devious wanderings, but the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night; there will be great discouragements, but also great consolations; and at length Moses will bring us to the very verge of Canaan, but there he gives us over to Joshua, and he himself dies and is buried.

But what is meant by the law, or the spiritual Moses, dying and being buried? Our Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John xiii. 24. Unless the outer die, the inner does not live. When death occurs at the outside, resurrection occurs within. There is a time when religion ceases to be a law, and becomes a life. It is this process in our spiritual history, which is represented by the Death of Moses and his Burial. When a man dies, he dies only to the sight of men, he lives to the experience of angels. Though seen no more below, he has risen to higher life. So when the law of God has entered into our spiritual being, and we no

longer talk of it, and look at it, as something external to ourselves, it has vanished from sight, but it is a greater power than ever.

Something like this spiritual change, takes place in many operations of our lives. In the early days of childhood we learn to walk; we are taught how to point our feet; we are shewn, we are aided, and rules are laid down for us, by which we are trained to the really wonderful achievement of standing in a way no artificial statue can stand, and are enabled to execute the highly complicated movements which constitute walking. But after a few months we can walk so perfectly, and run so well, that we forget we ever had any rules, or any training at all. The laws have entered into our life. They have become habits, and we have ceased to think about them.

It is the same with the rules of language. When we are learning to speak and write a language correctly, we think much of the rules, and make them often the subject of conversation with others. The rules act as leaders, and we proceed step by step under their guidance. But when we have acquired a full and familiar use of language, so that the rules have sunk, as it were, into our very being, we cease to notice their outward form, and gradually forget them. Their spirit and their principles we never forget.

These illustrations will give us a conception of the spiritual truth involved in the Death of Moses.

While we keep the law before us, while it is the object of thought and concern lest we offend in any point, while we frequently fail through weakness or perversity, and conscience chides and condemns us, it is our spiritual Moses leading us on and dealing with us as Moses dealt with Israel. When, however, the time has come that the Lord sees religion may take in us a deeper and more interior form, then Moses vanishes from sight, not to be less influential, but more. Moses when invisible, ruled more completely than ever. Being dead he yet spoke. He was more really alive in himself, and in the ordinances of Israel, than in his earthly lifetime. So is it with the law to each of us. When it has become our life, when as a matter of course we are devout, sincere, truthful, chaste, unselfish. When we live on innocently, cheerfully, purely, lovingly, we have not to consider what the law is, we have the law in ourselves. The Lord has made us a law, in the new nature he has given us. Moses who was *with* us, is now *in* us. He has died, and the Lord has buried him, and no man knows his sepulchre even to this day. The interiors of man are known to the Lord alone.

The good man is wiser than he knows. The Lord has buried in him myriads of things, from childhood to youth and manhood, whose sepulchre he knows, but no one else. They form part of our very nature, and if something occurs, which calls them forth, they are found, and come to light, if not in form, yet in strength and influence. They are written in the book of our lives. They are inscribed upon our hearts, our minds, our brains, our hands. And if anything come across us which is contrary to these laws of heaven which constitute our second nature, we resist and revolt against it at once. When the letter of religion has thus become spirit in us, it might be supposed by a casual observer that we are less concerned about it, because we talk less of it, but no mistake could be greater. It rules in us now unquestioned and supreme. Religion thus absorbed into our being, is in far greater strength than ever it was, when it was more frequently in conversation. We have arrived at that stage in which we can truly declare, like the old Greek, "We do not say great things, we do them."

The truth we are endeavouring to exhibit, in considering the particulars spiritually shadowed forth in the Death of Moses, is illustrated by our daily treatment of food. However agreeable to the eye, or solid to the touch our viands may be, they impart no strength until they become invisible. So long as they are in the mouth, or their existence can be recognised in the stomach, they convey no strength to the system. But when they are no longer sensibly experienced, then they have passed into our general constitution, and are felt as strength and stimulant in every part.

So with that righteousness, after which we should hunger and thirst. When the Word of the Lord is placed before us by the Book, or by the preacher, we should handle it, look upon it, taste it, and eat it. "When I found thy words," the Prophet said, "I did eat them, and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart." But good as spiritual eating is, and better as is spiritual digestion, which is the attendant on the exercise of doing good, yet the best of all is that vigour in the ways of holiness, that doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with the Lord, which constitutes the Christian's daily life. When the precept is hidden within, the principle is felt with greatest power. All the great powers in nature are invisible. And when religion becomes an inward, holy force, a still small voice, a secret impulse to do "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good

report," then may it indeed be said, "The kingdom of God is within you."

But it is written that "Moses was buried in a valley over against Baal-Peor." A valley, in spiritual language, means the natural mind : for this in relation to the exalted principles of the spiritual mind, is as a valley in relation to mountains. The unregenerate condition of the sensual man was represented in vision to the Prophet by "a valley which was full of bones."—Ezek. xxxvii. 1. Of a better state it is said, "Blessed are they, who passing through the valley of Baca (weeping), make it a well.....they go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."—Ps. lxxxiv. 6, 7.

The same signification is doubtless implied in that beautiful passage in Hosea, "The valley of Achor (trouble) shall be 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."—chap. ii. 15. For when earthly sorrows lead us to humility, trustfulness, and love, the valley of Achor does indeed become a door of hope. Tribulation leads to spiritual victory, and we sing there as in the day of our first conversion, when we came up out of the land of Egypt. Moses, then, being buried in the valley, represents the divine law absorbed, and become supreme in the natural mind.

But we must not forget the significance of the expression, "over against Baal-Peor." Baal seems to have been the general name for the idolatrous emblems of the Sun-god, which were set up in different localities, and whose worship, with one variety in one place, and another variety in another place, was diffused over Canaan, and probably over the whole East. At first, there can be little doubt, Sun-worship was the worship of the Heavenly Sun, the Sun of Righteousness. Degeneracy, however, darkened the human mind, and lowered the ideas of men from heaven to earth, substituting the Sun of nature for their idolatry, instead of the worship of that everlasting Light which the angels adore. Thus arose the service of Baal.

Just as now in papal lands, there is the worship of our Lady of this place, and our Lady of that, each image of the Virgin being supposed to be potent for some particular cure, or some particular blessing, so that in the minds of the ignorant there are many Virgins, with varied and peculiar powers ; so was it in olden time, with Baals. Baal-Peor, from the varied notices in the Word, seems to have been the Baal of impurity, worshiped with disgusting rites. The place Peor, deriving its name from a

temple for such worship. Baal-Peor, then, would represent in the human soul, combined selfishness and sensuality. A soul that worshiped its own will, and carried out its impure wishes, would have in it a spiritual Baal-Peor; and its unhallowed states would be as loathsome in the sight of heaven as the impure scenes which polluted Baal-Peor. But when the law of the Lord has been received within and written on the tablets of the heart, a holy watchfulness takes place over against Baal-Peor. The powers of the regenerate life close down all the tendencies to wrong. The body of Moses, like a spiritual fragrance, purifies the place. The Lord has buried Moses there, and though no man knows the place of his sepulchre, yet he is a spiritual power that forbids Baal-Peor to be desecrated any more. "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: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Such are some of the lessons which are suggested by the spiritual consideration of the Death and Burial of Moses. Let us lay them well to heart. Let us follow our Moses, the divine law, until it has led us from Egypt, and disciplined us in the wilderness; until we are prepared to exchange outward law for inward love. Then the Lord will bury him in the valley over against Baal-Peor; and see, surely, that though he is dead to outward sight, he is alive to him.

SERMON LIV.

RAHAB AND THE SPIES.

“And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window. And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not. So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all things that befel them.”—Josh. ii. 21—23.

After the thirty days mourning for Moses on the plains of Moab were passed, Joshua, like a judicious leader, lost no time in carrying out his glorious mission. The Jordan was in sight, and six miles beyond Jordan stood the formidable city of Jericho. The king and people were intensely hostile from dread, and probably from detestation. They were the outpost of that terrible system of idolatry and sensuality based upon communications with the impure dead, by which Canaan had been altogether polluted.

The Baals, which are joined to the names of places all over the land, indicate the numerous seats of the idol-worship of the Sun-god perpetuated under that name.

Then Molech, horrid king, besmeared with blood,
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears,
Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
To this grim idol.

Ashtoreth, the Moon-goddess, Chemosh, Dagon, and many others, all various compounds of lust and hate, had their shrines in numerous places, and not only influenced their followers to impurity and iniquity, but to the practices of both in the name and with the sanction of religion.

Communication with spirits, with devils who were regarded as gods, constituted the especial abomination of the Canaanitish nations, and made their existence as intolerable to the world, as a terrible cancer is to the body. The safety of humanity

required the dreadful excision from the world of those who kept manifestly open the dread avenues of the hells, and were the obstinate spiritists of ancient times. In Deuteronomy xviii. 9—12, we read, "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, a sorcerer, an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who enquires of the dead. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and BECAUSE OF THESE ABOMINATIONS, THE LORD THY GOD DOTH DRIVE THEM OUT BEFORE THEE."

The imperfections and perversities of our fallen nature are such, that in spite of the holiest truths and holiest influences of the purest religion, we often fall into errors and evils we bitterly regret. But when evil is made into a system, with sanctions from the eternal world, when each circle has its demon, and its medium, and the mysterious utterances are taken for the voice of an angel, if not of God, then the influx from hell is terrible indeed. The stream is wide, the devastation awful, and if such practices are persevered in, the end will be as it was with the Canaanitish nations, ruin and death.

Jericho stood, then, over the Jordan, with its walls and battlements blocking the way of the Israelitish host. Joshua knew that this strong place must be overcome, or no advance could be effected, and the whole enterprize would be arrested. He sent prudently two explorers forward. He knew the necessity of accurate information, and he waited until his Spies had returned, and related their experience. They met with Rahab, a kindly hostess whose house was on the wall. She was inwardly convinced that Israel's God was God indeed. She loathed the abominations of her people, and she took sides with the servants of the Lord of heaven and earth. She not only sheltered the men, but she said, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when you came out of Egypt: and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side of Jordan. And as soon as we had heard these things our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and

in earth beneath. Now, therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token." —Josh. ii. 9—13.

The men engaged with her, that if she aided their escape and kept their secret, hung out of her window a scarlet thread, and collected her family consisting of father, mother, and household under her own roof, both she and they would be preserved unharmed in the destruction of the city, and their engagement was kept. She and her father's household were saved when the city was destroyed; and afterwards she was married to Salmon, a distinguished man of the tribe of Judah and ancestor of David.

Having thus got the interesting circumstances attending Rahab and the Spies before us, let us consider the spiritual lessons involved in this portion of the Divine History; for I trust that the spiritual counterpart of the various events which have distinguished Israel's journey thus far, will have prepared us abundantly to remember, that their pilgrimage and their conflicts are the divine description of the struggles and progress of all who do their christian work in the regenerate life.

To regard the subject in the true point of view, we must reflect that our mental states may be divided into two classes—those of the external man affecting our words and works, and those of the internal man affecting our principles, motives, and sentiments.

The progress of Israel in breaking from their bondage, and journeying through the wilderness, represents the work of religion so far as it consists in reforming the external man: bringing the outward life into order and obtaining a copious supply of heavenly instruction.

The advance of Joshua and the Israelitish host into Canaan, represents carrying the work of religion into the interiors of the soul, into the heart and its affections.

We all know the conduct may be quite correct and amiable, so far as all outward observation goes, and yet pride, ambition, envy, covetousness, malice, guile, contempt of others, scorn, and self-seeking in a thousand ways may keep the inner region of the soul a hidden den of horrors and of pain.

"The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

Hence, the work of Israel in conquering Canaan, represented the work of the Christian led by the Lord Jesus, the Divine Joshua,

overcoming the hidden lusts and passions of the inner man. The giants, the strong armies, and powerful cities which had to be subdued, represented the lusts and strongholds of sin in the interior foldings of our subtle, secret natures. Jericho was the first of these bulwarks of wrong. It stood right in the way of the army. It had strong walls, and was straitly closed, so that every possible resistance should be made, and the progress of Israel should be arrested.

This first strong city was called Jericho, or as the word means in Hebrew "his moon," which name was probably derived from Moon-worship, and, from its practice there, would symbolize a sentiment or a system which stands in opposition to the purification of which we have spoken.

According to wide-spread notion and practice, a person may be religious and bad-tempered, religious and selfish, religious and malicious, religious and proud, religious but bitter, religious and unjust to those who in state-politics or church-politics think differently from ourselves.

The persuasion which hinders the work of religion in the heart is a spiritual Jericho. It is a strong and formidable city; it blocks the way against the army of heaven; it has a variety of bulwarks and defences. But Joshua, our Joshua, the Lord Jesus, is determined to overthrow it, and all the true Israelites follow Him.

He first sends two messengers to spy secretly. The Lord appointed two, Moses and Aaron, to lead the people. He sent out His disciples two and two to preach.—Luke x. 1. Two things flow out from Him ever, love and wisdom; two things He wishes ever to be received by us, faith and charity. And these two explorers represent the influences of faith and love applied in the soul, to ascertain the real condition of the obstacle to the Lord's government in the heart.

They found the city was not uniform. Generally it was bad. There was, however, one kind heart, one who feared the Lord, there. She was in the city, yet not fully of it, her house was on the wall. She is described by an opprobrious name. But when we remember the abominations that prevailed over the land, impure rites being made religious, probably the same name might truly designate all the females, but the very young.

The true Church is the Lord's bride, the Lord's wife.

At the end of a Church when false doctrines reign; all have departed from this pure relation, and are represented as committing mental adultery.

This circumstance was represented by the literal actual condition of Jericho, when the best person in it was called by that unhappy name. The Church at its end was also represented by the two women who were concerned in the marvellous judgment of Solomon of which we read. "Then came there two women that were harlots unto the king and stood before him."—1 Kings iii. 16. We know the two were inwardly very different beings, though spoken of by the same name.

Of the Samaritan woman who heard the Lord gladly, He said, "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly."—John iv. 18.

These things were literally as stated, no doubt, but they were expressive also of spiritual facts. All who are united to falsehood instead of to truth, are spiritually described as not having their proper husband. But there are two great differences amongst them. There are those who love falsehood, because their deeds are evil ; and there are others who love falsehood only because they have been taught to believe it true, and they know no better. This latter class can be brought into a new and better state. They are only outwardly joined to an old and evil superstition, and are not inwardly in the love of it. They are represented in this divine narrative by Rahab, who, though a harlot, inwardly feared the Lord, and whose house was upon the wall.—ver. 15. Such have many errors, but they are so far right that the Lord can deliver them, and unite them to His Church. Wall especially represents doctrine. The doctrines of the true Church are meant when it is said, "They shall call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." The false doctrine that our salvation does not depend upon purifying the heart, but upon mere instantaneous belief of what a preacher vividly proclaims, this is the wall of Jericho.

The two messengers turning in and lodging with Rahab represent the reception of truth and love by one in the way to be saved, and the welcome which is given to them. They were placed in the roof, and hidden amongst stalks of flax which were laid in order.

The same spiritual circumstance is doubtless intimated by bringing them up to the roof of the house, as was intended by our Lord, when He said in the Gospel, "And let not him who is on the house-top come down to take anything out of his house." To place on the house-top, is expressive spiritually of making an object of supreme regard ; lifting into the interiors of the mind. Among the flax that was set in order, would mean

among such truths as were clearly seen and accurately arranged, as things supremely regarded. Flax, from which linen garments are made, would represent the separate truths from which a spiritual heavenly system is wrought. "The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

The prevarication of Rahab in denying the men to be there, and sending away the officers of the king with a falsehood, represents the fear and weakness of a soul not yet confirmed in the truth.

She saw, however, that her safety lay with Israel, and, therefore, she at once threw in her lot with them, and looked to them for safety.

The circumstance thus presented to us in the case of Jericho, is verified also in the case of every fallen Church, of every decayed system of superstition. The majority, probably, love to have it so. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. But there are also many who pray for better things, and will embrace the light, when it is suitably introduced to them. They look for the light, and hail it when it comes, that it may be manifest that their works are wrought in God. The two malefactors crucified with the Lord Jesus illustrate the same truth. They were both outwardly joined in the same condemnation, yet how different; they were both railing somewhat at first, but when they looked at the Divine Sufferer, and felt His sacred purity and majestic pity, how the heart of one was melted, while the other railed on. Such are the Rahabs of all times. They are enclosed in the meshes of a perplexing and unworthy system which has been hallowed to them by the recollections of childhood, and being associated with parents and friends, venerable and dear, yet they see higher and holier light has come in, and their best affections leap to the light. They have many a struggle, but happily at last the truth makes them free, and they become free indeed.

While experience enforces upon us the conviction in relation to any body of persons united in any project, or in any bond however pure, all are not actuated by the same pure purposes; all is not gold that glitters; it is a consolatory and cheering maxim, that sometimes in bushels of chaff there are many grains of wheat, and when these are called out and planted and watered they will be the germs of fresh harvests. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains: the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."—Ps. lxii. 76.

The Spies going into the mountains and tarrying there three

days, represented the strengthening of faith and love by interior devotion, while evil excitements are around, until they are fully prepared for the trials which are to follow.

In the rescue of Rahab, though she had many faults, the discriminating mercy of our Heavenly Father at Jericho was shewn, as it was in the deliverance of Lot from Sodom. Each single soul is cared for. The angels told Lot that nothing could be done until he was gone from the devoted city, and bade him "Escape for his life, and flee to the mountain." So is it in the judgments of the eternal world. "He who seeth not as man seeth, who looketh not on the outward appearance, but looketh upon the heart," (1 Sam. xvi. 7), provides that all the outward coverings of circumstance and seeming should be removed, and what the inward character is should be unveiled, for all is known to Him.

The sign which the men required Rahab to display at her window, had a deep spiritual significance. Colours are symbolic. Such as partake of red, the colour of fire, represent states which relate to love, the fire of heaven. Colours of a colder cast, the blues, greens and whites, though bright, are the symbols of states of a character more intellectual.

Scarlet, as a secondary red, represents brotherly love, the affection next in value to the love of God. Without this heavenly quality there is no saving state. "By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren."—1 John iii. 14. He who thinks he loves God but does not love his brother, is but a self-deceiver. If he has not the lower virtue of love to those around him, whom he sees, he can never really have the higher love to the Lord, whom he has never seen. It is a bad sign when there is no scarlet thread seen bound at the window. "Above all things put on charity," said the Apostle, "which is the bond of perfectness." There be these three, faith, hope and charity, and the greatest of these is charity. Such, then, was the meaning of the requirement from Rahab, "Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window."

Scarlet was one of the three sacred colours to be offered to the Lord, and to be used in the clothes of service in the holy place, and in the holy garments for Aaron.—Ex. xxxix. 1. A *scarlet thread* was placed on the hand of the most important child born to Judah from Tamar. In the offering of the cleansed leper, it was commanded that cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop should be used (Lev. xiv. 4.), to represent the rational thought, the loving affections, and the painful but salutary truths, which have

all to bear their part in the return to health of the spiritual leper. Sins against charity are represented by the scarlet of the bad man, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," (Isa. l. 18); while the same bright colour in the cloth of *scarlet* covering the table of shewbread was a sign that all true love to the Lord manifests itself in love to the neighbour.—Lev. iv. 5.

In all the souls, then, that can be saved there must be the scarlet thread displayed in the intellectual window; or in other words, whatever may be their defects in other respects, there must be kindly sentiments in all their thoughts. They must be disposed to think tenderly of every sufferer and desire to do them good. The Lord in the judgment will regard those only as His who have been ready, according to their ability and best judgment, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and free the captive. The King says to them, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Matt. xxv. 40. The same gracious and important lesson is taught in the circumstance, that John, the apostle of brotherly love, was the one selected to behold the descent of the New Jerusalem. It is not without a beautiful import that it is written, "I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."—Rev. xxi. 2. If there were more "Johns," more would see the golden city coming down from God to men.

Rahab was, lastly, to bring her whole household, father, mother, and brethren into her own house, and not to utter the business in any wise to the citizens of Jericho, or she would peril her safety. And in this circumstance we may perceive the representation of decision of character. We who sever ourselves from the evil, must have no part nor lot with them; we must have no divided mind, or tell the business of heaven to the adherents of the kingdom of darkness; we must cast no pearls before swine; but resolutely close our house against the evils around, and wait in humble confidence for the salvation of the Lord. Then shall we assuredly find that when ruin and death are around, the walls of superstition and falsehood crumbling on every side, and the sensual and the vile sinking into the miseries they have made, Joshua will save Rahab, and her father's household, and all that she has alive, and she will dwell in Israel, or in other words, the Lord Jesus will preserve His own, and plant them in His Church, where they will be saved and happy with the whole Israel of God.

SERMON LV.

THE FALL OF JERICHO.

“ Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel : none went out, and none came in. And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns : and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout ; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.”—Joshua vi. 1—5. .

The fortified and powerful city of Jericho must have looked very formidable to the Israelites, as they pitched their tents between the Jordan, and the city which barred their way to the land they had come to possess. Its high walls, its frowning battlements, and closed gates, would threaten the army unaccustomed to assail strong places, with difficulties and dangers not easy to overcome. Yet they must be overcome, or else the ordinances of the Jewish Dispensation could not be carried out, nor could the lessons of the regenerative life be given in the Word of God. Jericho then must fall. And its Fall was directed to take place in such a manner, as altogether to represent how falsehood sinks before the majestic power of truth. A careful reading will enable any one to conclude that, every arrangement was commanded, to symbolize a lesson, as well as to declare a fact. A city corresponds to the Church, especially as to its doctrines. These surround the minds of the members of the Church, as walls surround a city. The Church is called by Paul, “the city of the living God.”—Heb. xii. 22. The prophet says “Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.”—Zech. viii. 3. Our Lord said of His disciples, “Ye are the light of the world, a city which is set on a hill cannot be hid.”—Matt. v. 14. The holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, has clearly a similar signification. The doctrines of truth in general, forming a spiritual

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defence, being represented by a city on a large scale, we may not find it difficult to conceive that each particular doctrine is represented by a city of a smaller kind, especially if we remember, as there is much reason to believe, that small cities were formed at first, of small families who dwelt together for mutual instruction, and mutual support.

A city, to oppose the Israelites, would represent a doctrine or system which opposes divine truth, and especially that portion of divine truth which insists on the purification of the heart. Jericho would represent such a system. It stood directly in the way. Now, what stands directly in the way of the religion that insists on inward conflicts, against the passions and impurities which infest the unregenerate heart? Is it not the system of salvation by belief alone?

"Believe and all your sin's forgiven,
Only believe and your's is heaven."

This system persuades the soul which embraces it, that its great danger is from the wrath of God, and it undertakes to pacify that wrath. Thousands upon thousands believe this, and rejoice because they consider that heaven is secure, although they have never successfully resisted one bosom sin.

The evils condemned by law, and the habits, which are palpable violent breaches of the usages of decent society, they possibly avoid; but the secret evils of envy, hatred, jealousy of others, detraction, the stings of malice, the ten thousand overreachings, and the thousand falsehoods of business, evils which society allows, and by which selfishness attains its cruel ends, these are passed over. It is dreamed that they result from the body, and when the body is put off, these evils will be left behind. Vain, vain delusion! These sins are of the mind, not of the body. Such as death leaves us, eternity finds us. The heart filled with jealousies, contempts, and hates, which made us restless and unhappy here would be far more out of place in heaven. The ambition which crept in meanness, or strode in madness, to reach the highest place, regardless of the ruin which it caused, would be felt as a cruel wolf, amidst the innocencies of heaven. The scheming subtlety which winds and winds, and weaves its spider webs to ensnare and betray for its far reaching but knavish aims would be felt as a serpent, a fox, or a spider in heaven.

All that mercy has done out of such a soul to save it, and what has it not done, will fail in its saving effects, unless we co-operate with our Saviour, and let Him conquer these evils in the heart, and root them out. He has done all that Infinite

Love could do, to impart to us the means of Regeneration. He, our Heavenly Father, set us free from the powers of darkness by entering into the world as our Redeemer, and living and dying for us. He has given us His Word and His Church. He has conjoined us with angels. His Providence is ever with us. He has given us the facts of experience. We never saw a constantly happy person, who has not steadily done the work of regeneration by resisting self-love, and the love of the world, in heart and in deed.

Those who have not done the work of inner religion are, as is well known, as unamiable as many of those who make no profession of religion at all, and in their old age as wearisome to live with, and as wretched in themselves as the ordinary run of mankind. Nothing but steady wrestling against the promptings of self and sin,—nothing but carrying the war into the interiors of the soul, the very bowels of the land, and conquering again and again,—will enable us to overcome those multiplied miseries which are included in that index of wretchedness denominated bad temper, and will secure us that heaven in embryo,—interior peace. The people of Jericho say, We cannot, and we need not, trouble ourselves about anything, but just believing. The commandments of the Lord cannot be done in their application to the heart. Why, endeavouring to prepare for heaven by purifying the heart would be trying to save yourself, and going to heaven by merit! Such a mode will never do. What a time it would take! Oh no! You have only one thing to do. You must believe the Lord died for you, and then you will be changed in a few minutes, and all will be right. And if your lusts and failings return again, you must believe again, and at the hour of death believe you are saved by this death, and you will no doubt be happy in heaven. True the Lord died for us, for all of 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.”

He died, and rose again, that we might LIVE. He died, that His love might constrain us to burst away from sin and selfishness and live to Him. He died, that the powers of darkness might be removed which held souls in bondage, and that “we might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.” He died, that we might abhor the inward, as well as the outward evils which led to such a sacrifice, and thence-

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forward we might gratefully walk in His ways, and be regenerated by His Holy Spirit. "The goodness of God leadeth us to repentance."—Rom. ii. 4. But if we despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, though we outwardly conform to what religious society may demand of us, yet the great interior evils remain. We are as deformed in the sight of the Lord as before, as impatient as before, as passionate as before, as envious as before, as self-seeking as before, as disposed to prevaricate and torture the truth to our own wishes as before, while pretending that we are in no danger from these deadly sins of the spirit, because Christ died for us and disarmed the wrath of God. We are turning the greatest blessing into the greatest curse. We are straining at gnats, and swallowing camels. The hasty violent word or blow of a person who makes no profession of religion, is a far less guilty thing in itself, than the keen bitter malice that regards every act of another with jealousy and hate; that misconstrues his words, imputes to him the worst of motives, pursues him to loss of property, or perhaps of life, but does it coldly and politely. When, therefore, a person retains this inward awful sin, and others similarly unworthy, and resists the Spirit of the Lord, and the warnings of divine truth, which ever say, "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes," not before the eyes of men only, but before the eyes of God; and resists this inner purification as unnecessary, saying that all he is afraid of is the wrath of God, and exclusion from heaven: when he declares that Christ by His death pacified the wrath of God, by paying the debt of suffering, which, what is misnamed justice claimed, and now by believing this, he is sure of heaven, he is making "a scheme of salvation," which is a mere mental Jericho. The name of that city in Hebrew means, his moon, and it represents a system derived from the vain moon of self-derived intelligence, having no foundation in the wisdom of the Word of God. By that Word we are taught the conduct must be changed, but still more the heart; the words must be purified, but still more the spirit; heaven can only be won by being heavenly minded. To become angels we must become like-minded with angels. And, without that inward regeneration, we never can enter heaven.

"Except a man be born again,
Of Jesus' living breath:
No heavenly confidence shall cheer
The awful gloom of death.

"Except a man be born again,
He cannot enter heaven:
Lord, on my inmost soul impress
This warning thou hast given."

Every system, then, that stands in the way of inward struggles with the evil tempers and lusts of the heart, is a mental Jericho. If man fancies he has nothing to do, because the Lord's adorable mercy has done so much, then the work of inward religion is paralyzed, and paralyzed by the very acts which were intended to stimulate and strengthen it.

Oh the enormous perversity of man! Oh unparalleled infatuation! What! did the Lord die that men might keep their bad tempers, their impatience, their disdain, and their greediness, and take no harm? Did the Lord die that His own laws might be broken, and no one be any worse? What! did the Lord die that wrong might be 'right, and right of no consequence? Did the Lord make the universe on the principle that only the truly good can be happy, and did He die to reverse this principle?

Did he die that men might have a scheme of religion by which they might despise His commands, ignore His will, His word, and His heaven, but be quite safe in taking a fiendish soul with them into eternity, if they only believed this scheme, and uttered a prayer?

This is what such a system practically comes to. Life is nothing; death and belief are everything. We know how ingeniously such a scheme of religion can be put together. We know how by a few texts skilfully arranged, and mixed up with mere assertions and human devices, it can easily be presented so as to deceive the simple and to please the bad, to whom a covering of religious smoothness, and plenty of selfishness, are a compound most attractive; yet no better world, no life for heaven are possible where such a system practically prevails. The hidden hell of secret passions in the human breast, is cloaked, where such deceits are clung to, and eternity reveals the worthlessness of a plan, which sets at naught the holy teaching of Him who said, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

The Fall of Jericho, then, represents the fall of such a system. And the divine directions for the mode of overcoming Jericho, represent the manner in which we must proceed to overcome the delusive pretence that faith only, true or false, can be a substitute for Christian love and Christian life. Faith is the evidence of truth, to direct and strengthen Christian virtue, not a substitute for it. "If I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing."—1 Cor. xiii. 2. Faith is confidence in truth, in all truth, not a selection of some portion of truth, and putting it instead of all the rest. True faith is confidence in all that the Lord is, all that the Lord has done,

and all the Lord says. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," (Rom. x. 10); not believeth *instead* of righteousness. Our faith must always be the loving trust which seeks the Lord's will in everything, and ventures to do it in despite of ourselves, the world, and the powers of darkness. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous. This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 John v. 3, 4.

The spurious faith, which pretends that God's commandments cannot be kept, and ought not to be kept as necessary to salvation, but that belief in the Lord's death at any hour is the one thing needful, is the mental Jericho.

The Lord commanded Joshua, and Joshua commanded the people, that they should go round the city in silence once each day for six days, led by seven priests, blowing seven trumpets of rams' horns, preceded by the ark: that on the seventh day they should go round seven times: that when the seventh circuit was complete, the whole people should shout, the walls would fall down flat, and then the people of Israel should march straight before them. Everything should be destroyed except Rahab and her household, who were one in heart with Israel; and the vessels of gold, silver, brass, and iron, which were to be put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. These important particulars are all most instructive. Let us consider them one by one. We can hardly fail to be struck at the outset, by the use of the number SEVEN. The seven priests were to have seven rams' horns, to go round the city seven days, and on the last day seven times. We find everywhere in the Word great prominence given to this number seven. The days of creation, significative of the states of regeneration, are seven. The clean beasts went into the ark by sevens. The Church is designated as the seven churches, represented by seven golden candlesticks. The Lord is said to have the seven stars in His right hand, and seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are called the seven spirits of God. The number seven in Hebrew is also the word which means perfect, complete. SEVEN, then, is used to signify that which is complete in goodness, THREE, that which is complete in truth.

The seven priests, then, who were to follow the ark which headed the procession, would represent the complete devotion of all the holy feelings of the heart, to overcome the system of falsehood of which Jericho was the symbol. The ark went before them to represent that they were led by the Word of God, whose essence, the commandments, were enclosed in the ark.

The procession of the army round Jericho, would represent the survey on all sides which is made by the soul, of the system which is opposed to its spiritual progress. The procession moved on in solemn silence, except that the priests sounded the trumpets as they passed along.

The silent march would represent meditation, contemplation of the character of this error, in every part. The sound of the trumpets would represent the proclamation of the whole bearing of divine truth, that it requires justice, love, wisdom, order and obedience.

The rams' horns which were used as trumpets, would represent the truths of charity. Sheep in the Word are the types of the good affections of charity, which make the Christian kind, and disposed to follow and obey the great Shepherd in His works of mercy.—John x., Matt. xxv. The ram, the male of the sheep, would represent the intellectual side of these affections, or the firm thoughts and strong determinations which sustain and defend such gentle affections. The horns, by which the rams exert their force, correspond to the truths of the Word by which strong-minded Christians exert their force. Using these horns for trumpets, would represent the earnest publishing of the truths of charity from the Word. Love the Lord, love your neighbour, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the widow, defend the fatherless, aid the sick, set free the captive. "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." These are rams' horns that sound aloud against a system of "only believing." These send terror into the conscience of one who has unhappily been led to trust in a mock religion, and are as formidable as, no doubt, the alarming blasts of the rams' horns were, to the terror stricken, guilty inhabitants of the polluted Jericho, when the majestic army of Israel went round the devoted city.

The march on each of the six days, would represent consideration and comparison of this dangerous delusion, in relation to all the states of the regenerate life. The states in which there are labour, struggle, and temptation, are represented by the six days of labour; and the rest that follows, by the seventh day, or the Sabbath.

The seven times of making the circuit of the city on the seventh day would correspond to a full, complete, and entire devotion of the whole good affections and thoughts of the mind, to the overthrow of this delusion, and its expulsion from the soul.

All the previous operations represent man's obedience to the

divine teachings. They were uttered to Israel by Joshua, they are uttered to the spiritual Israel, by the Lord Jesus. He is our Divine Joshua, and when we faithfully obey, then comes the time for the divine operation. We cannot remove interior evils, or interior false delusions, of ourselves; but when we in faith obey, carefully following the Lord in our duties and our trials, the fulness of time comes, when the divine spirit of our Lord removes them as triumphantly now, as it did the walls at Jericho.

When all the people shout, indicative of the fervour of the whole soul, then the Lord acts. Omnipotence takes the strength from the frowning bulwarks, and they crumble to dust. When power from the Lord smites them, they become very weakness, as at the Red Sea, when,

“The Lord but looked out from His pillars of glory,
And Egypt's brave thousands are sunk in the tide.”

So, here, at Jericho, the walls fell flat. The defences were gone. The panic stricken inhabitants saw they were utterly helpless. The hour of judgment was come. Israel went straight before them.

Doubtless the extirpation which followed by divine permission, was a necessity for the health of the universe, as the removal of an ulcer is occasionally for the health of the body. But it represented also the removal in the soul of the falsities and evils of the dangerous system represented by Jericho.

Nothing is so black, so defiled, so full of horrors as that least read of all books, the unregenerate heart. It is a dark chamber of horrors, a miniature hell. When it resists purification, under whatever pretence, or whatever doctrine, it is resisting the only means of ever attaining happiness, of ever reaching heaven.

When the light of divine truth has laid its inner character quite open, by every fancied excuse, and all false pretext falling down like the walls of Jericho, then, all that the better principles of the soul have to do is to go straight before them, destroy all the nest of evil impulses and evil thoughts, taking up the words of the Psalmist. “Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me so that I am not able to look up, they are more than the hairs of my head.”—Ps. xl. 12. “They compassed me about, yea, they compassed me about, but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.”—Ps. cxix. 11. The inward sins thus unfolded to us will perish and die. While every good, like Rahab and her house, will be preserved, and thus far we shall have attained the greatest of all victories, the victory of self, and be able to lay the crown at the adorable feet of Him whose name is Jesus, because “He saves His people from their sins.”

SERMON LVI.

ACHAN'S SIN AND ISRAEL'S DEFEAT.

"And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."—Joshua vii. 20, 21.

After the signal triumph of Israel in the conquest of Jericho, with its strong walls and numerous population, the army was elated, and buoyant, as they well might be. With so striking an evidence that the Almighty was with them, they readily concluded that they must be victorious: nothing could stand before them. So long as they were obedient no doubt this was true. The divine promise had been given, and was always maintained. "The Lord shall establish thee a holy people unto himself as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee." How soon they were to learn that the golden thread of obedience was the bond of all their success. That broken, and they were not only weak as other nations, but weaker than they. Long sojourn as slaves in Egypt had made them slaves in soul. They were especially subject to panic. They fled almost when not pursued. "They had trembling hearts, failing eyes, and sorrow of mind." With God, none so strong; without Him, none so weak as they. This was speedily exemplified in their shameful retreat from before Ai.

About twelve miles from Jericho was that royal and ancient city, a stronghold of the Amorites, in a strikingly beautiful and mountainous region, of what afterwards became the province of the tribe of Benjamin. We read of it in the time of Abraham. It was about five miles east and south of Bethel. It was

glorious with ancient recollections, but now filled with a polluted though resolute race.

Joshua, like a skilful general, lost no time in surveying the neighbourhood of Ai. While the impression of the fall of Jericho was fresh, he sent forward spies to view Ai and its neighbourhood, who reported that it would be an easy prize. Three thousand men they said would be quite competent to take this city, and more than that number would be unnecessary. Three thousand men were sent, but instead of effecting their object, or finding the men of Ai daunted, the latter turned out vigorously, and though only thirty-six of the three thousand were killed, the whole body were driven in cowardly and headlong flight, "wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water." Judge what must have been the feelings of the valiant Joshua. He fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until the eventide. He was bowed down with shame and sorrow. The success he had so recently gloried in was wrested from him; and the most appalling calamities threatened the whole host. The great cause of which he was the leader would fail unless this tide of defeat could be speedily rolled back, and the cause of so great a disaster be discovered.

He lay before the Lord; where the sin-stricken and sorrowing should ever lie, until they learn why they have been chastened, and where is the offending evil, and what is the repentance required.

It was revealed to the humbled and sorrowing chief, that the divine ordinance concerning Jericho had been broken by some concealed traitor, and instead of the devoted goods of Jericho all being destroyed, this greedy traitor had concealed a portion. Instead of the gold and silver being all brought into the treasury of the Lord, and consecrated to sacred uses, a base person had secretly held some back. To give a salutary lesson to the whole host, an examination of the whole, according to their tribes and households, was to be made by lot, until the guilty individual was found, and the sin entirely put away by his destruction.

Early the next morning the faithful Joshua roused the camp, and the Divine Will was stated. An examination was made from tribe to tribe, from family to family, and from man to man, and at length the lot fell upon Achan, whom Joshua charged to confess his guilt, which had thus perilled Israel's safety, and brought such shame upon them. Achan did confess in the words of our text. "I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish

garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them." Joshua sent messengers, and verified the confession. The objects were found hidden in, and under Achan's tent. They were brought out, Achan and his family were stoned to death, and the whole of the objects and the dead bodies were burned with fire. A great heap of stones was raised upon the spot, and the place was called the valley of Achor, (trouble) a name which marked the spot for centuries of after time.

It seems at first sight as if the punishment was extremely severe. But we must remember that Israel's existence as a nation depended upon obedience. Israel's existence, as the representative of a Church, until the coming of the Lord, was essential even to the existence of mankind, for unless there was a Church among the human race, that race would perish. It was essential, therefore, that the Sin of Achan should be thoroughly rooted out, by condign chastisement; and, consequently, it was permitted by Him who sees and knows all things, and whose mercy endureth for ever. To destroy one offender whose sin endangers millions, is no doubt truest mercy.

But, when we consult the spiritual import of what Achan did, it will open to us the counsels of Divine Wisdom still more fully, and enable us to gather lessons of instruction for ourselves, and for every age of the Church.

Achan, the troubler, as the name implies, the covetous one, being so soon discovered in Israel, brings strongly before us the truth, that only by degrees can regeneration be effected. Israel has just accomplished a signal victory. They would, no doubt, suppose that now all would be easy; but almost directly afterwards they discover evil in their very midst.

How often is this the Christian's experience! One day he feels he has accomplished a glorious triumph, but the next he is humbled, even to the very dust. In the morning, he will be full of gratitude, thanksgiving, and heavenly emotions; but ere the day is over some trouble arises, and reveals how little progress he has made in heavenly advancement, and he almost despairs of solid success.

The overthrow of Jericho, as we have previously seen, represented the overthrow of that system opposed to all true preparation for heaven, which makes salvation consist in making the Lord merciful, who is ever merciful, instead of in making man pure, good, and heavenly. This system is a very compound one. There is a mixture of good in it, as well as of evil; of truth as

well as of falsehood. There is apparent humility, and real pride of heart. There is lip worship, and form worship, and much talk of religion, and sometimes much apparent zeal, even fiery zeal. The effect of the whole is to prevent the soul overcoming one inward sin, and at the same time to flatter itself that all is right, and that it has great earnestness for God. It often makes up for its want of innocence, sweetness of temper, devout love of truth, and inward justice, by a great disposition to condemn others for trifles, and slight differences of opinion; while its own want of charity, the very essence of heaven, is entirely overlooked. It "strains at gnats, and swallows camels."

This disposition to trouble Israel, is in every heart. A merely external religion it can do with very well. It even likes it. It can deck itself out in forms, and march about, self-seeking in ceremonies, by which it aims at displaying itself and gratifying its lust of power, instead of promoting the dominion of truth, of goodness, and of the Lord. Achan saw a goodly Babylonish garment, and he coveted it. The garment was probably a handsome robe, a splendid product of the Babylonian weavers, renowned for their skill, but is named in the Word for its spiritual meaning and correspondence.

Babylon is a symbol of a ceremonial religion full of the lust of power. It was an ancient papacy. We read of it in the earliest times, Gen. x. 10. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord; and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. Babylon developed itself to be a system of ambition, with a hierarchy of many grades, and its monarch, a sort of pope. Its restless ambition to over-ride all other kingdoms is marked throughout the sacred pages, and attained its summit, probably, in the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the days of Daniel. The pride of heart in this empire is described by the prophet Isaiah, when he says of the king of Babylon, "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High."—xiv. 13, 14. This awful power, which made the world a wilderness in the long centuries of its reign, even in its ruin, left its name and its history to be a symbol of a system in any age, by which the lust of power is united to the forms of religion.

Long after ancient Babylon had brought ruin on herself, and been trampled in the dust, her empire utterly lost, her name only retained in books, and her ruins buried in the mighty mounds

of the desert, scarcely more than guessed at by the learned traveller, her name is used by John in the Revelations, as the symbol of a similar system in the Christian Church. "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."—Rev. xvii. 3—5.

This system, which is a subtle and elaborate scheme, substituting the priest for God, and ritual for regeneration, is the most terrible foe humanity has to encounter. In its despotism all other despotisms have their rise. Its supposed mysterious power overawes the soul and paralyses the reason. It is the mother of ignorance, superstition, and persecution. Disobedience to the Church, it is keen to mark, and terrible to punish; while with disobedience to God, or to high principles of virtue and truth, it is extremely tolerant, and has indeed great difficulty in seeing. It is an ever-restless power-hunting cabal, which vitiates the very fountain of right, and substitutes mysterious mummery for intelligent worship, morbid monks and nuns for christian fathers and mothers, drivelling superstition for true human virtue, zeal for winking pictures for a wise love of God, and a kind charity to man, and turns glorious regions of the earth, which are almost as fair as Paradise, into Spains, and Irelands, and Mexicos.

When Jericho has been overthrown, and the soul has determined to apply religion to the inner man, and extirpate its lusts, thus entering on the true work of regeneration, to have an Achan come forth and covet, and seize a "goodly Babylonish garment" is to endanger the whole work again: it is to admire and to substitute ceremony and parade for mercy, faith, truth, and love. It is again to begin playing at religion, instead of driving the ploughshare of divine truth through the thorns and briars of the heart. It is to divert the attention from the one great aim of the Word of God, which is to transform the hell in man into a heaven, to abolish bad temper, and infuse angelic sweetness; to destroy all impurity of heart and mind, and to implant noble affections, leading ever to happy homes, and to all the developments of art and beauty, which can elevate and dignify mankind.

The Achan, then, who secretly covets "the goodly Babylonish

garment," and takes it into the midst of his tent, represents a principle in the heart of the most subtly dangerous kind, and one that must be extirpated, or no further progress can be made in real regeneration. It is the disposition to take the forms of religion for secretly selfish ends. It is the act of a spiritual thief, stealing, that he may still more dangerously impose. It is profanation, and involves mixtures of good and evil, truth and falsehood, fatal in the highest degree to the soul's well-being. Achan took two hundred shekels of silver (value £22 16s. 3d.), and gold one-fourth in weight, to the value of £91 5s., and hid them in the earth beneath his tent, the silver being placed lowest of all.—ver. 21. The gold, called in our version a wedge of gold, is denominated in the original, perhaps from its shape, but very significantly for its spiritual meaning, a *tongue* of gold.

Silver corresponds to spiritual truth in the Word, and gold to heavenly goodness, both these significations being indicated in the divine declaration concerning the Lord's coming into the world. "I, the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. 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. 16, 17. "The words of the Lord are pure words, as *silver* tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."—Ps. xii. 6. "I counsel thee," said the Lord, "to buy of me *gold* tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."—Rev. iii. 18. But a tongue of gold, would seem to imply goodness only in doctrine and profession. Chrysostom, (golden mouth), the celebrated patriarch of Constantinople in the fourth century, was so called because of the splendour of his eloquence. The fervour of charity which appears in discourse may exist while there is no real charity in the heart, or love in the sight of the Lord. The numbers five and fifty are used in the Scriptures chiefly to denote what is small. The two hundred shekels of silver would imply *much truth* in proportion to the good, and both being hidden in the earth would correspond to their being used for earthly purposes, and having only earthly ends in view.

There must be a reason for the expression twice used, "the silver under it." It would probably imply truth ever ready in the conversation and profession. The three things, the Babylonish garment, (or garment of Shinar), the tongue of gold, and the two hundred shekels of silver, thus arranged and hidden in the earth in the midst of the tent, represents a state of mind disposed to piety, but for selfish ends. No spiritual victory can be attained while the soul is in such a case.

We may pray, we may praise, we may profess, but while a selfish desire reigns, and we are really hypocrites, in vain shall we go forth to fight the Lord's battles. We shall fall in the very first temptation.

We may pride ourselves in our Babylonish garment, we may be very correct, and even beautiful in our robes of ceremony, but, if we are not animated by the desire to sympathise with our fellow-men and do them good, to root out, in ourselves, every unjust desire, and unhallowed temper, our profession is vain, and there is iniquity in our solemn meetings. We shall want heart in all our spiritual enterprizes, and where we expected signal triumph, we shall sustain disasters and defeat. The time of judgment will come, represented by Joshua examining Achan, and investigating his whole case. The Lord Jesus is the judge. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. "For judgment came I into this world," said the Lord Himself, John ix. 39. Happy are they who have their judgments in this world, and do not wait for the terrible disclosures of eternal truth, in the world to come.

The assembling of Achan and all belonging to him, the silver, the garment, and the tongue of gold, his sons and his daughters, his oxen, his asses, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, to be judged and condemned by Joshua and all Israel, represents the repudiation of this evil, with all the ideas and affections produced from it, and all that is subservient to it. The whole is to be utterly rejected. But first Joshua said to Achan very tenderly, "Why hast thou troubled Israel?" No doubt the great chieftain would speak full of sorrow to see such wickedness and folly arresting the onward march of the whole nation, and bringing ruin on the unhappy head of the offender. The Lord Jesus addresses such unworthy followers in the expostulatory terms, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Why hast thou troubled Israel? Why hast thou troubled thyself, and thy whole house?

If we were wise enough to ask ourselves, when feeling the promptings to wrong, why should I do this, how salutary such inquisition would be! Why should a man go against the dictates of right? Why should he imagine that he can do well, and go against the laws of the All-wise? What would it profit a man if he could gain the whole world and lose his own soul? But he can gain nothing. Should he clutch unrighteous riches he loses all true enjoyment of them. Death is always in the pot. Is there less famine in having abundance when you cannot

eat it, than in having nothing at all? No happiness is possible separate from God. "In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

What hollow grimace, what soulless worship, what monotony and hypocrisy must be there! Piety without peace; restraint without religion; holy offices to do, with no holy motives. A masquerade and an inward curse, such is the penalty of soul which attaches to one who makes a fair outside, with an inward spirit like the whited sepulchre of which the Lord speaks, beautiful without, bad within, full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness.

Why then hast thou troubled Israel? Why not be genuinely good? "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." Why not walk with God, do His will, and by promoting heaven and happiness below, prepare for heaven and happiness above.

The life of one who is truly religious, is not a bitter, but a noble life. With little, the good man is content; with much, he is conscientious; in all things grateful, wise, and humble. Such a one walks the earth, as the threshold of His Father's palace, and looks to heaven as the home of higher ministries.

The stoning of Achan, and all he had, with stones, and the burning of them with fire, which formed the sad climax of their lot, represented the ruin which comes upon all who profane religion for selfish ends. Their condemnation by all truths was represented by stoning them with stones. Their being given up to the fires of lust, passion, and hateful feelings, was represented by burning them with fire.

The pain, the agony, the despair of such a state, is placed before us when it is said, "Wherefore, the name of that place was called the valley of Achor (or trouble) unto this day." How sad the lot of those who continue Achanites until they are so made one with their deplorable evil, that their capacity of repentance is gone, they are all Achan. On the other hand, when, like the Israelites under Joshua, a soul has suffered defeat, and in dismay has entreated the Lord for light, and lain like Joshua, before the throne until revelation come and it beholds its Achan, and condemns and repudiates it; then the tribulation leads to health, to purity, and to joy, and in the language of another part of the Divine Word, "The valley of Achor becomes a door of hope, and a place for the flocks to lie down in. The soul sings there, as in the days of youth, and as in the day when we came out of Egypt."

SERMON LVII.

AI TAKEN

“And so it was, that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand, even all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.”—Josh. viii. 25, 26.

No sooner had Joshua cleansed his camp from treason, which had led to the defeat at Ai, and the discouragement of the host, than he resumed operations against that city. The Lord said unto Joshua, “Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.”—Josh. viii. 1.

There stood the stronghold of Southern Judah before them, the fastness which had defied them before, and was quite ready to send out its audacious thousands against them once more. The people of Ai were bold and brave to maintain their idolatries, their corruptions, and defilements. The Israelites were exhorted not to fear. An indispensable condition of success in all things is confidence. A faint heart will destroy any cause. Firmness and reliance on the Lord when we are following what we believe to be His will, will impart dignity and force to our efforts, and furnish the first elements of success.

“Fear not, neither be thou dismayed,” was said to Joshua; it is equally said to us. When the ordeal of severe temptation comes, and come it will, again and again, to all who are striving to be good, then these words of our Lord should strengthen and encourage us, “Fear not, neither be thou dismayed.”

Why should we fear the powers of evil? They are strong only in delusion and wickedness. When the light of truth fully comes, their power is gone, their rocks are rent asunder. The laws of the universe are really on the side of the good: the powers of heaven are on the same side. The Lord Himself puts

His right hand on the head of the humble and the earnest, and says, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last."

We have often shown that every event in the Divine History before us, is an illustration of that saving process by which we become prepared for heaven, and which we call regeneration. The marches, the battles, the cities taken, the names of the places, and all the particulars associated with them, were arranged under the direction of Divine Providence; and are all made part of the Inspired Word, that they may be an instruction for all ages, to enable every soul to say with the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."—Ps. cxliv. 1.

The name Ai is the Hebrew word for vulture: and that carrion bird, whose food is dead carcasses, is the appropriate symbol for the disgusting habits of evil which were literally practised by the people of Ai boldly and shamelessly.

Abominations of the foulest kind had become common things among the residue of the corrupted ancient Church, an important part of whom dwelt in Canaan. Intimations of them are given in Leviticus xviii, and then it is said, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God." These pollutions, combined with diabolical spirit-intercourse, formed that especial form of wickedness, which could no longer be tolerated in Canaan.—Lev. xx. 6, 22, 23.

The vulture was a name especially expressive of a city whose inhabitants revelled in impurity: who were shamelessly corrupt, and at the same time fierce and savage. The people of Ai were not, as some, timid in vice. They were ready for battle. They rushed immediately to the front.

Jericho and Ai represent two different classes of evils, and two different phases of character. Jericho represented such as do evil chiefly from false persuasions. Ai represents those who do evil recklessly. They love it, and they do it. They care

very little to excuse themselves. Wherever the carcass is, there such vultures are gathered together. Wherever evil is going on, they scent it, and hasten to the impure feast. Travellers tell us, that when a camel dies in the desert, although as far as the eye can see the sky is clear, in a very short time several of these powerful birds will appear hastening with potent wing to the disgusting prey on which they gloat. So with the boldly bad. They love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. They love sin, and are ready to fight for it. With them it is no matter of apology and excuse, they mean to sin as long, and as much as they can. Against them there can only be straight forward spiritual war.

It is, however, not only a question of different characters which the Church meets with in the course of her work of regenerating the world, but of different opposing principles in the same mind. We have each a Jericho, and each a more virulent Ai. We have difficulty in overthrowing in our own minds the persuasion, that a soul entirely ruled by heaven is beyond our reach; and this, like an opposing Jericho, stands in the way of the inward advance of religion. We acknowledge that it would indeed be a blessed thing to realize characters of which it could truly be said, These are Christians: they are people whose minds and habits are expressed in those admirable rules which were the "household words" of Swedenborg. "They read often, and meditate well on the WORD OF GOD. They are always resigned and content with the Dispensations of Providence. They always observe propriety of behaviour, and keep the CONSCIENCE CLEAR AND VOID OF OFFENCE. They cheerfully obey that which is ordained, are faithful in the discharge of the duties of their calling, and they make themselves as universally useful as possible. THEY ARE SURE THE LORD WILL PROVIDE." These qualities filled with love to the Lord, and faith in Him and His Words, would make a truly Christian character. How lovely in life would persons of such dispositions be! Yet they are only what the Word requires us all to be, and what all MUST be to enter heaven. What hinders such a description of the truly religious man being realized? Simply that we have a Jericho which opposes the idea of such a blessed consummation in us, and says it cannot be done. It allows, perhaps, that it ought to be, and some say it may be, but it CANNOT BE DONE now. This phantasy bars the way. The taking of Jericho describes how such a delusion sinks before true resolution, religion led on by the Lord.

“ This laughs at impossibilities,
And says it shall be done.”

Then behind looms our Ai,—our darling sin, be it of temper of lust, or of passion. Jericho has fallen, this too must fall. Perhaps we have tried once and failed. We have humiliated ourselves, and we have discovered the source of our weakness ; we had an Achan in the camp. Our worship was often ceremonial only, not heartfelt. We went through the round of service, as a right thing to do, but not as seeking with heart-agony power to overcome our evils, power to realize in life the simple but grand and only true ideal of the Christian character, “ Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

We have, however, discovered our Achan, and condemned and destroyed him. Now we are in full view of Ai. We intend to take that city. We failed before ; but with divine help we will not fail now.

The circumstances related in the Divine History, are, as we have seen in all the other events we have considered in relation to Israel's acquisition of the promised land, altogether significative of regeneration. These things, as the Apostle said of the history of Abraham, are an allegory.—Gal. iv. 24.

Joshua chose out from the host thirty thousand men.—ver. 3. This fact indicates the desperate character of the people of Ai, probably, as well as the strong position of the place ; for the men and women only numbered twelve thousand. Subsequently we learn that five thousand men were placed in ambush behind the city, on the west side between Bethel and Ai.—ver. 12. The great body of the people led by Joshua approached on the north side: between them and the city there was a valley.—ver. 11.

The resolute character of the men of Ai is indicated by their bold rush forth from the place against a body very much greater than their own in number, leaving not a man behind them in the city.—ver. 17.

The attack by Joshua and the host in front, on the north side which had the valley between them and the city, was no doubt intended to draw the inhabitants out, so as to make it difficult for them to rapidly return again ; but it also correctly describes the mode in which religion assails distinct and open sin. The literal words of the divine commandments are brought to bear upon it. The life of religion and the wrong things are placed in direct opposition. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not commit murder. Thou shalt not swear. Thou shalt not covet. These and the multitude of varied forms in which wrong is denounced

in the Sacred Volume, are brought face to face with the transgression. The valley between, designates the deeds in actual life which flow from the evil that is the subject of the trial. At such times of spiritual warfare the truths of the Word come forth in abundance. Truths of intelligence, involving great light, are represented in the Scriptures by the south, where the sun is at mid-day; truths adapted to the simplest, by the north, the quarter symbolical of least light.

Joshua and the open army approached on the north side, to represent the application of the plainest possible truths to the soul when an evil is to be overthrown. The Lord says, in fact, to every unpurified heart, "I come not to send peace upon earth, but a sword."

The work of religion, indeed, applies to the whole man. It is intended first to forbid evil acts of every kind, and then root out evil sentiments and desires. It has to put off and remove the old man with his deeds, and put on in heart and life, the new man, with all his fitness for happiness and for heaven.

This cannot be done, say many. Religion, say some, can make a certain change, and if a man has a right faith, he will shun evil, do good, and keep the Lord's commandments, as the effect of faith. But, as to yielding entire obedience, it is not to be done, and it is not expected. Faith is the one thing needful, and we must manage with our sins as well as we can, and hope for the best.

Against this self-pleasing and self-accommodating persuasion we must altogether protest. What would have been said of the Israelites if they had left the strongholds of the polluted people of Canaan unassaulted, under the craven pretence that they could not be taken. The divine charge was altogether to root them out. "Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place."—Deut. xii. 2, 3.

If any Israelite had lifted up his voice, and said, This cannot be done, they are too strong for us, would it not have been real unbelief, and unworthy timidity, in the sight of God?

Yet this is what is done when we speak of our sinful propensities and failings as too strong to be overcome by us, and to be left to the general operation of faith.

The divine command was to go up, and subdue and demolish

Ai. When it was not taken the first time, examination was to be made to find out the reason of the failure; a proper plan to achieve success was laid down, and the attack was to be made again and again, until full victory was accomplished. So must it be with us. When we see Ai before us, whether it be in our temper, in our greedy desires, in our vanity, in our apathy for good, or in any other form of selfishness, we must strive, and pray, and labour, until we have done the sacred work required of us, and rooted out this enemy of God from our hearts. We must first bring up the truths of the Word condemnatory of the evil we are striving to overcome. They are numerous, for the whole Word has for its object to subdue evil and to enforce good. The front attack consists of these soldiers of heaven, these opposers of sin, these words of weight, under the direction of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, our Divine Joshua. The insolence, impatience, and recklessness of evil, are shewn in the rush forth of the men of Ai to repel the approach of the warriors of Israel.

But Joshua had also placed five thousand men to lie in wait, and at the signal from him to assail the pestilent city from behind, and give it to destruction. These ambush-men, placed behind, on the west, represent those perceptions which observe the origin and tendency of the principles with which we have to do. Influx from heaven enters into good men from behind, where the cerebellum lies in secret power, the centre of our whole nervous system. Influx from the lower world also enters from behind. The liers in wait behind, represent those powers of observation which watch the operation of the hidden impulses and motives, which are the mainsprings of wrong. Observation behind, then, represents watch to detect the inner character of our resistance to the Most High. When the soul is determined to inquire into the real nature of its weakness and failures, to observe the issues of death as they come out of the impurities of self, and of the dark world which plays upon self in the human heart, we have liers-in-wait, five thousand men appointed by Joshua. The west side of the city, represents the evil which is opposed to love to the Lord, of which the east is the symbol.

Joshua lodged the night before the battle among the people.—ver. 10. The Lord is with the soul in the state preceding combat, to give confidence and strength. He sleeps not, but He giveth His beloved sleep. The Lord provides for our coming trials in various ways, but ever certainly provides. It may be night with us, and the coming trial may cast its shadows before, but when we are disposed to do the Lord's work, He will be with us and

impart to us strength needful for the coming hour of danger and conflict. "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be."

"And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai."

Early in the morning indicates the vigour of a new state. When the soul has girded up itself, and is ardently resolved to accomplish with energy the work which the Lord has appointed it to do, a new day has opened; it is very early in the morning. We oppose our evil, we look our mental enemy full in the face, and soon the battle commences. The contest in the soul is precisely like that of earthly war. There is the Lord Jesus, the Commander of the host. Then there are the subordinate Captains,—Faith, Hope, Charity, Self-denial, Love of Truth, Conscience, and many others. Under these are ranged in order by the Lord, hosts of truths to do battle against the opposing armies, and to overcome in the name of the Lord. At the early part of the battle we are informed that, "Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness."

It is one of the laws of Divine Providence, that before an evil can be conquered, it must be manifested, so that its real nature can be seen. This is the reason, no doubt, for the permission of evil in the world. Where evil does not break out before the world, it breaks out before the mind, and presents itself distinctly in thought. Such manifest presentation in the mind, of the heinous pretensions of evil, was figured in the case before us by the king and the men of Ai hasting and going out in pursuit of Joshua, and being thus drawn away from their strong-hold. When they were thus fully drawn forth, the Lord said unto Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that is in thy hand towards Ai; for I will give it into thine hand."

Divine Truth, drawn to a point against sin, is a spear. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," represents Divine Truth as generally opposed to all falsity and evil. It is a two-edged sword from the mouth of the Son of Man. But Divine Truth, as directed against malice and other evils of the heart, as pointed like the finger of conscience, the spear of heaven against manifest guilt, was represented by Joshua's uplifted spear directed against Ai. It was as if he said, There is the accursed fountain of a thousand crimes; there is the abode of robbers of your peace, destroyers of your purity, infesters of your path, defiers of your God. Strike down this gate of hell, this castle of

contempt, this reveller in pollution, this vulture of corruption. There is the rebellious bulwark of sin, the den of ruffians. Your enemies are now fully out before you. Destroy their lurking place and destroy them. Such is the import of Joshua's outstretched spear, held in his hand towards the city.—ver. 18.

The ambush arose quickly out of their place, and hastened and set the city on fire.—ver. 19. This destruction of the city by the liers-in-wait, represents the condemnation and destruction of evil by the interior powers of the mind. In the state here represented, there is a perception of the infernal character of sin. It is seen behind, it is seen before. It is condemned by the letter of the Word, and condemned by its spirit. It is seen to be fiendish in its origin, and to lead to ever increasing ruin. The ambush destroys the city, and then issues out against the ruthless robbers who had sallied out to destroy Israel. "Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed Ai. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until even-tide; and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day."

To hang the king on a tree, means to exhibit the infernal character of the principle meant by Ai in clear perception, and to condemn it. To take the carcase down and bury it under a heap of stones, is to reject it as condemned by all the great truths of the Word in its letter.

What, then, is our Ai? What evil have we still rooted in our hearts? What is our leading sin? Israel can make no advance in us until that is overthrown. There is Ai. We have, I trust, thrown down Jericho. We do not believe now that the inner purification of the heart is impossible, nor that it ought to be delayed. There stands Ai threatening our path: but Joshua is with the host. He is arranging the attack before and behind. Let us be courageous and faithful, sincere and steady. Let us unflinchingly devote to destruction the foes of our peace, the impure and selfish passions of our hearts, and victory will certainly be ours.

"We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with spiritual wickedness in high places." But we wrestle also on the side of Him who is Conqueror of death and hell, and at His command. Let us go on in His strength, for He has said, "I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."

SERMON LVIII.

THE COVENANT WITH THE GIBEONITES.

“And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them.”—Joshua ix. 14, 15.

The very remarkable transaction to which our text refers, is one that brings under our notice a weak and timid, but not a vicious people. Duplicity is the defence of slavish minds. The Hivites were the old, possibly the oldest, inhabitants of Canaan which history can trace. They inhabited the centre of the land, but were also settled here and there in various portions, some of them dwelt in Mount Hermon.—Judges iii. 3, Joshua xi. 3. Gibeon, their chief city, was only about five miles from Jerusalem on the north. They appear at different times in the Sacred History, and on the whole give us an idea of a well-disposed simple people. Every church however corrupt, and every nation however generally abandoned, has a remnant of persons who are good compared with the wicked multitudes among whom they live. In Canaan, there were portions of the inhabitants less heinous and intolerable than others, and the chief of these were the Hivites, of whom were these inhabitants of Gibeon.

These people dreaded the approach of Israel. They had heard of the fame of the Lord, and what He had done in Egypt. They had heard also what had happened nearer home: how it had fared with the kings of the country, just beyond the Jordan, who had resisted the passage of the God-protected host, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan. They were not warriors, and if they had been, they felt themselves quite incapable of stemming the tide of invasion. They took counsel, and concluded the best thing to be done, would be to represent themselves as a nation living far away, of no importance to the Israelites, in relation to the country which was then being

settled, but very desirous of being in friendship with those who were visibly protected by heaven.

There were wily ones amongst them, and they sent ambassadors, disguised as men who had come from afar. They took old sacks upon their asses, and leathern wine bottles, old, rent, and mended. They had old garments, old clouted shoes, and old bread, dry and mouldy. The Israelitish leaders heard their story, enquired nothing further, and made the defensive covenant with them, which the Gibeonites sought; and when, three days after, they learned that the representations which the Gibeonites had given of their being from a far off country were not true, they still concluded to abide by the covenant, possibly from learning that they were a harmless people, and because they had undertaken to do good service, as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation. These people continued under the protection of the Israelites up to the time of David, for more than five hundred years, (2 Sam. xxiv. 7), though they seem to have been but little distinguished. Their lives were saved, and they were protected, and that was all.

We shall be prepared to admit, without doubt, that this very curious transaction has its significance, like all others recorded in the Divine Word. Indeed, if we have succeeded in obtaining a definite conception of the divine idea in the Israelitish dispensation in making the law, as expressed by the Apostle, a shadow of good things to come, then it must follow, that every incident in the Divine History is expressive of some fact, some circumstance in our spiritual life, and in the progress of the Church.

What then is involved in this covenant with the Gibeonites? What by the covert and surreptitious way in which it was obtained? And, lastly, what is indicated by the permission of these people to live, but to live in comparatively lowly offices, as hewers of wood and drawers of water?

The Canaanites were the central portion of the ancient Church. In the perversion, the prostitution, and decay into which it slowly and gradually, but surely sunk, when its emblems became idolatry, and its virtues generally perished, the mental leprosy had still its centre in them. Its inspirations were no longer from heaven; but instead, their impious lusts were inflamed by the weird suggestions of the nether world. Then sin in its thousand forms celebrated its hideous orgies, and in their turn, long before the Jewish time, they made the commandments of none effect by their traditions.

At the end of a religion however, when men sit in darkness,

and the shadow of death ; when darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people, all are not alike : there are deceivers and deceived. Some delude, and some are duped. Some love darkness rather than light ; some follow the little glimmer they have, and grope for the wall like the blind. There are Pharisees, keen with the lust of power, rigid in ceremonial ; lax in God's laws, but tremendous in their own. There are looser hypocrites, greedy in lust, sanctimonious in pretence. There are multitudes of slavish souls who serve the priest's office for a morsel of bread, but who know nothing and care nothing for the essential spirit of religion, or of heaven. But, besides these, there are good simple souls, not deep thinkers, having none of the spirit of reformers or martyrs, but yet quietly living in the best way they know. These are easily imposed upon, and especially with old things. They are slaves of antiquity, and a notion they would not admit for a moment, if it were introduced now for the first time, they are easily induced to stand by, as something sacred, if they are told it has been handed down for a thousand, or several thousand years.

What little good these people have, they really get from hourly every-day lessons, and their own simple reflections. But the cunning tell them to believe, and they are easily persuaded to say, that they are good from the far fetched mysteries of ancient times. They are near neighbours, but they are induced to acquiesce in saying they come from a far country. They do almost by nature, as the Apostle said, the things of the law of God, or, at least, by those precepts of childhood which preserve the essentials of religion for children in almost every form of faith and superstition, and which surrounds them with an atmosphere in which there is much that induces love to God, and kindness to man and beast.

Their virtues are every-day virtues. They are not theologians, but they try to do their duty. They have morality and strive to do no harm. They have grown up in connection with old worn out forms of faith, and they are easily persuaded to think that they are good because of these tattered remnants of a better time. They are fearful, and they do the bidding of others who work, as the sacred narrative says, wilily.

The truth is, no false views ever lead to virtue. They either lead directly away, or they weaken the motives to right, and induce failure by shortcomings. But, associated with every form of superstition and fallacious teaching, there are portions of practical truth ; and, with the simple and unreflecting multitude,

the two things are taken as one ; and for the sake of the practical good whose worth they know, they cherish also the worn-out, mischievous, national or ecclesiastical delusions, of whose antiquity and sacredness they are solemnly assured.

These, the virtuous supporters of a decayed system, are often alluded to in the Divine Word under the name of the remnant, and under many other names and emblems. "Except 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. The simple, well-disposed but misled, and the inwardly bad, which form the mass of a decayed religion, are represented by the sheep and the goats ; the penitent and impenitent malefactor at the Lord's crucifixion ; by the Hivites who were spared, and worse tribes who were destroyed ; and also by the two women of Solomon's judgment.—1 Kings iii. 16—28. In this latter case, as in the case of the Hivites, there was deception practised. The woman who had the dead child, put it into the bosom of the mother of the living one ; and only by the wise discretion of the king, was the true mother of the living child discovered. The virtues which flow from a living faith in the heart, in spite of many a superstitious delusion which tends to choke the good seed, come out as a real live child, derived from inward, holy trust, and often is this new-man palmed off upon the world as the child of mother superstition, who has herself overlain the only child she ever had, and destroyed it by mummery and falsehood. Whenever the simply good in her communion, brings forth from a loving heart a loving life, she claims it, and insists it is hers, and she will persist it is hers, until the Divine Solomon in His righteous judgment discloses the solemn truth that only a living loving faith can inwardly embrace the truth, and make its light so shine in good works that men can see them and glorify that Heavenly Father, from whom all virtue comes. Superstition only really brings forth a dead or dying child. The Hivites, then, represent the simply good in a fallen church, who are timid, fearful, and much misled, but who can be preserved by Divine Mercy, and will not be turned away.

But what are meant by the old clothes, the old sacks, and bottles, and the old shoes, and the old bread, which they brought with them, and which they were ordered by their wily ones to offer as testimony that they came from a far country ?

All essences must have forms. All principles must have clothings. Words clothe ideas. Thoughts clothe affections. All we know of things really are their clothings. Thoughts

cannot be perceived until they are uttered, and cannot be uttered until they are clothed. Our *habits* are the ordinary regular practices, which clothe our fixed principles.

Garments in Scripture, represent true sentiments or erroneous thoughts, which clothe the soul and all things belonging to it. They are ever given new from heaven to those who sincerely turn in repentance to their God and Saviour, and from their love of truth ask to be led of Him. Thus, we read, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion: put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city."—Isa. lii. 1. "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."—Isa. lxi. 10.

The returning prodigal, the type of every true penitent, was received by his Father with the loving kiss of acceptance, and then the Father said to 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. Our Lord said to the Church of Sardis, "Thou hast a few names in Sardis, who 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."—Rev. iii. 4, 5.

To get truths from the Word, and to adapt them in sincerity to our own states, needs, and circumstances, is to obtain new and beautiful garments. Pure views, thus obtained in love, are white garments. What, then, could more strikingly represent old worn-out superstitions than old worn-out garments? And such is their meaning in the sacred narrative before us. There were three kinds of old things used on the occasion of the Hivite ambassadors coming to make their covenant. Old sacks for their corn, and old leathern bottles patched for their wine: old shoes clouted for their feet, and old garments for their persons: and lastly, old mouldy bread for their eating.

The sacks for corn, and the bottles for wine, are the emblems of such things as can be stored in the memory to be ready for future spiritual use. When these are real truths, fresh, and living, they are the bags of which our Lord speaks, which wax not old, (Luke xii. 33), and these can be filled with heavenly corn: the new bottles which will contain the new wine without bursting, are doctrines which can be stored with the cheering hopes that exhilarate the spiritual pilgrim, and which cheer both

God and man. A true church affords a supply of goodness in instruction, plentiful as the corn in Egypt gathered under Joseph's provident care. The wine of cheering truth also flows down in abundance, when the mountains of love to God rise up boldly in the soul. It is then, as the Prophet said, "The mountains shall run down with new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk."—Joel iii. 18. On the contrary, when it is no longer a living but a dead church to which we are attached, even when we are well-disposed, we have only traditions for truth, traditions worn-out and incredible, old sacks having scarcely any corn. Instead of an abundance of cheering hopes,—the new wine of the kingdom, we have only old wine-bottles dry and patched, of which we make the best we can, but which have very little sap or life. What are old Jewish traditional notions, of which the meaning is lost, but old bottles? What are doctrines that have long been handed down by great bodies of Christians, but which hinder us from loving and adoring the Lord as a God of Love, and which puzzle the soul with incomprehensible mysteries, such as, the substitution of one person for another, the resurrection of dead bodies, the burning of the world, things which science has long proved to be in utter opposition to truth; what are these but old bottles, bound up, but still being again rent, and fast wearing out?

Then, as to the old clouted shoes, and old garments. Surely we cannot have observed the very imperfect rules of life in which men are left to walk, when they are told that **DOING** has no bearing on salvation; that if we believe aright, and attend to the means of grace, we shall not have to account for the deeds done in the body. What is church-going united with extortion, injustice, unlawful business, overreaching in business or ill-temper at home, but walking in old and clouted shoes? Our feet ought to be clothed, as the Apostle says, with the preparation of the gospel of peace.—Eph. vi. 15. "Put shoes upon his feet" said the father to the penitent son. Let the outward life correspond to the inward change. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his walk aright, will I shew the salvation of God."—Ps. l. 23. The doctrines, too, which only treat of old modes of belief, and overlook, or but little apply to the regeneration of the soul, are only like old garments, which are too old, too much torn, and too small to cover a man. Our Lord warns us against patching up these old theories. "No man," He said, "putteth a new piece of

cloth on an old (a very old) garment : for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.”—Matt. ix. 16. The Lord will give new and beautiful robes to those who seek them from Him, by regeneration, the robes of inward truths, which keep the new heart warm, and beautify the soul. “I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment wherewith thou mayest be clothed.”—Rev. iii. 18. We need not the old, confined, worn-out theories of by-gone ages, handed to us by others, they are too narrow, and not to be compared for a moment with the robes given direct from the Lord to the bride, His Church now, when she is arrayed and adorned for her husband.

Then, lastly, these Hivite ambassadors brought mouldy bread. What are ceremonies that have no life in them, but mouldy bread ? The religion which has become mechanical, the services which are without heart or meaning, taken through the same dull round, are no real support to the soul. They are mouldy and worn-out. How sad it is to see these form the only food for thousands, and the people taught to love to have it so. What is mouldy bread to the bread of life :—the bread of love from the living Saviour ?

The Lord Jesus, who is goodness itself, presents Himself to the soul and says, “Whoso eateth me shall live by me.” “I am the living bread that came down from heaven to give life unto the world.” This impartation of His own nature to the soul is the only source of true spiritual support. Yet, a mistaken conception of the exaggerated value of antiquity induces multitudes to watch services, to them meaningless, and fancy they are getting some nourishment ; when, if it were not for their own inward prayers, and mental ejaculations, they would perish of spiritual famine. None of these old things are really what they profess to be, any more than the worn-out tokens of the Hivite ambassadors were genuine indications of the real character of that people. These tatters are without. There is, however, true life within. Notwithstanding these people were not genuine in what they professed, they were genuine in being harmless people, well-disposed, and willing to render service such as they could,—to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, and, therefore, Joshua and the princes of the congregation said, “Let them live.” In this decision is represented the goodness and mercy of the Lord. He saves the well-disposed of every creed. Old Church or New Church, Established Church or Dissent, it is not *belief*, correct or incorrect, which saves, but *love*

for what is good and true, for the sake of what is good and true. They who love much, are fitted for the higher degrees of blessedness; those who love little, for the lower. Those who are subordinate spirits in their choice of humble virtues will have lower degrees of blessedness; they will be hired servants in the kingdom of our heavenly Father; but the hired servants have bread enough and to spare. They will be hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Wood is the symbol of goodness of a low kind, but still goodness. There is not much life in wood, but it is externally serviceable for many of the purposes of life. To hew wood spiritually, is to shape life from a steady sense of duty, not from high enlightenment, nor from deep feeling, but from duty. If some men will not strive to attain high principle, but they will steadily do good, the Lord says, "Let them live." Such will not be seraphs glowing with love, nor cherubs guarding with grand truths, but they will be of those who are round about the throne. "Let them live. They may not be desirous of enjoying great draughts of the water of life, but they may be very useful in drawing water for others. In various ways, then, they may assist in the acquisition of truth and its diffusion among men, under the direction of the princes of the congregation. "Let them live."

It is said, the Israelites took of the men's bread, and asked not counsel of the Lord when they made the agreement with them at first; but, subsequently, notwithstanding their more accurate knowledge the covenant was confirmed.

The partaking of the mens' bread would imply no very nice discrimination on the part of the Israelites themselves. And in the position of spiritual progress represented, it will probably imply a want of nice thought, and quick sensibility in joining in exercises of worship, with those who are in ancient error. To do this induces dulness of mind. We should in all things ask counsel of the Lord. In all things seek for light from heaven. And though we shall still say of those in less pure and perfect states, "Let them live," it will not be from dulness to discriminate, but from a desire to elevate and to bless.

Let them not impose upon us their tattered garments as sacred things; but let us say with the Poet,—

"Old opinions, rags and tatters;
Ye are worn; ah, quite threadbare!
We must cast you off for ever;
We are wiser than we were:
We have found a mental raiment
Purer, whiter, to put on.
Old opinions! rags and tatters!
Get you gone! get you gone!"

SERMON LIX.

THE BATTLE WITH THE FIVE KINGS, AND THE SUN AND MOON STANDING STILL.

"Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."—Joshua x. 12—14.

It is an important reflection that presents itself to the mind, when we compare the quiet life in the wilderness which the Israelites had led for many years before the death of Moses, with the great activity that followed the appointment of Joshua, and the entrance of the Israelitish host into Canaan. No sooner is the Jordan passed, than we read of the storming of Jericho, and then the stirring events involved in the struggle with Ai; and now we have before us the crisis of the great struggle between advancing Israel and the corrupt nations which existed as a moral pest—the worst portion of the human race enslaved in sin—an organized mass of the foulest polluters which blighted the hopes, and defiled the career of man.

The friendly adhesion of the Gibeonites to Israel was evidently an alarming circumstance to the mountain kings, the Amorites, who ruled each over his fastness and its fair but formidable territory. They determined at once to punish those whom they regarded as betraying the country to the dreaded strangers. The king of Jerusalem, with four others, "gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it."—ver. 5. The men of Gibeon were filled with consternation, and sent pressingly to Joshua for instant help. "Slack not thy hand from thy servants," they said; "come up to us quickly and save us, and help

us, for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us." The Israelites were at Gilgal, which appears to have been for some time their head quarters. Joshua prayed to the Lord for direction, and was answered, "Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee." A night march of nearly thirty miles was determined upon, while the defiles in the mountains were open; and before their astonished enemies could have supposed the army in motion, they were appalled by the impetuous attack of the now dreaded men of Israel. The hosts of the kings were defeated with great slaughter. The panic-struck multitude fled up the mountain road to Beth-horon the upper, chased by their victorious pursuers, and over the mountain range to Beth-horon the lower; the Amorite power was broken, and Israel fairly established in the land. While the hurrying foe was passing between the two Beth-horons, a terrible storm of hail-stones added to their disasters, so that more died with hail-stones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

The valorous leader of the Israelites felt the unspeakable importance of the victory then being achieved, and full of intensest energy, he sought to make the blow inflicted upon his opponents as complete as possible; and as he pressed on with his brave followers he cried out in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." And by divine arrangement of the atmosphere, not difficult to conceive, the light of the sun was prolonged, and the moon appeared to remain still, until the rout of the Amorites was accomplished, and no power remained capable of defeating this people, once slaves, but now trained, encouraged, and directed by the Lord.

Many decisive battles have made lasting impressions on the career of nations, and given a certain character to their progress throughout their whole subsequent history. The victory at Poitiers which drove back Mahometan power in Europe, and our own battle of Hastings: Lutzen, Leipsic, and Naseby were of this kind; but more than these in their consequences was this great struggle at Beth-horon. It was the Marathon of Israel. Victory there secured the settlement of Canaan by the twelve tribes, the existence of the temple, the psalms of David, the line of prophets, and the vast consequences to man's spiritual history which have flowed from these.

Devoutly, therefore, should we trace the footsteps of Divine

Providence in history, and feel how, by links only manifest to meditation, and fully known only to the All-wise, all the generations of men are connected together, and depend upon each other so as to form one vast network of events and circumstances leading on the progression of all mankind, all conducted by Infinite Mercy, all tending to the highest attainable good. Hence, the Psalmist exclaims, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever. To him who smote great kings, for his mercy endureth for ever : and slew famous kings, for his mercy endureth for ever."

We have already remarked how great is the contrast between the comparative quiet of Israel's history for many years before the death of Moses, as compared with the rapid and decided actions which followed the march over the Jordan, under the command of Joshua. When we remember the broad distinction between Israel on the outside of the Jordan, as representing religion in its external work of reforming our lives, and Israel on the inside of the Jordan, or within the promised land, as representative of religion when it is regenerating the heart, we shall perceive the important bearing of this fact on the Christian's spiritual history.

After the agitations of decided conversion to God, and the struggles attendant upon a steady forsaking of outward sin, there comes a considerable period, not marked with vivid incidents. We do not fall back, but we are not aware of striking advancement. We go on in the usual way, learning and living as ordinary Christians do, but with nothing very progressive in our experience. We are encamped at the foot of Sinai, acquiring a knowledge of laws, statutes, and judgments in daily life. We are not tried much nor do we triumph much. We are for a long time in a somewhat monotonous state. We scarcely know whether we are advancing or not, and sometimes we suspect we are not. On the whole our lives and states are uneventful, but Divine Mercy is doing wonders for us within, and preparing us for that hidden work of religion represented by the labours of Joshua. Divine Mercy now discloses to us, that no bitterness of temper must be allowed to remain, nor secret pride. A thousand things we have not detected in ourselves, are revealed to us, and those magnificent words said to Israel are realized to us, "The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms : and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee ; and shall say, destroy them."

This revealing of our hidden foes to us, this disclosing of

ourselves to ourselves, accompanied by the conviction that all wrong principles must perish from our hearts, and sins of feeling and sins of sentiment must be expelled as faithfully as formerly were sins of action, is a divine work. These disclosures within, of hidden hates, of hidden envies, vanities, and pride, of hidden passions, of hidden lusts, of secret fires and impurities, those foes of a man's own heart and household is shewing us the Amorites of the soul, and their extermination is the work of Israel under Joshua. A shallow religion says it cannot be done. All true religion says, it **MUST** be done. Only the pure in heart can see God.

The difference between a true genuine divine religion and a spurious religion is not so much in the outside life, and not so much in outside worship, as in the inward dispositions, sentiments, and feelings of the heart. The pharisee is as strict in outward shew as the man of true religion, but he loves the sin he dares not do, and hates those who do not favour him with deadlier animosity and more persevering rancour than many a worldling does. The crimes flowing from the hates of men professing religion form the darkest pages of the sad annals of human crime and misery. These secret evils true religion will root out; a spurious religion either passes them over unnoticed, or if it cannot ignore them, declares they cannot be overcome, and insists that the essence of salvation is believing some dogmatic sentiment, made all-important by the vehement maintainers of it; or in the diligent practice of the ceremonies of the Church. Every old religion has thus its traditions which make the commandments of God of none effect. Every time that true religion is re-asserted from heaven, its golden burden is the same. "Make you a new heart and a right spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Every impurity is within the heart until it is regenerated. No outward conformity to worship suffices to prepare the soul for heaven. Except the inward hell is transformed into a little heaven by the labours of heart-work under the leadership of the Divine Joshua, the Lord Jesus within, who can and will overcome our Amorites, there is no peace.

The Canaanites were the centre of a decayed Church, an ancient system once true and immensely extensive, but long formed into a strange mixture of worship and vileness. That ancient religion had acknowledged a Sacred Volume consisting of three great portions, the book of the Wars of Jehovah, the Prophecies, and the Book of Jasher, probably poems or psalms, for the references to this book are all poetic. All over Canaan

were names of places indicating their dedication to the uses of a Divine Revelation long before Israel possessed the land. Thus, we have a king of Jerusalem, the leader of the armed hosts against the Israelites, and his name was Adoni-zedec, the lord of righteousness. In the time of Abraham, nearly five hundred years before the events we are now considering, there was a Melchizedek, king of Salem, called the priest of the Most High God.—Gen. xiv. 18. Many of the names mentioned in this book of Joshua, which, to the cursory reader convey no meaning, are seen to be eminently suggestive when their signification in Hebrew is given. Thus, in such a sentence as the following, how much of meaning is hidden. “And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir; and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-Sepher.” Debir, means the word, or the oracle; and Kirjath-Sepher means the metropolis of the book; Kirjath, whenever named, means the metropolis of a district, and Sepher is Hebrew for book. We can scarcely doubt that this Debir had been from very ancient times a city of priests, the teachers and expounders of a Divine Revelation.

The kings who rushed to prevent the march of Israel, and who began by attempting to destroy those whom they regarded as traitors to the land, (although they, the Hivites, were its most ancient known inhabitants) had significant names.

The names with their interpretations are as follows:—1st, king Adoni-zedec, the lord of righteousness; 2nd, king Hoham, woe unto them; 3rd, king Piram, a wild ass; 4th, king Japhia, outward show; 5th, king Debir, the word.

These kings, one may easily perceive, represent such a mixture of truth and falsity as to form a system totally opposed to real purification of the heart, and real justice in life. Superstition esteems itself lord of righteousness—superstition breathes out denunciation against others, “Woe unto them.” Adoni-zedec opposing, calls upon Hoham to help him. Superstition’s religion is sour, melancholy, and morose; it moans, and warns, and denounces. It is continually saying, “Woe unto them.” True religion is gentle, courteous, charitable, kind; ready to be just in its appreciation of others, and to do justice. True religion rejoices in God’s love and mercy to all, is genial, generous, frank, and easily entreated; ready to oblige, ready to defer to others, ready to act for the public good. Superstition strains at gnats, while it swallows camels. Superstition is full of gloom and ready to condemn. It raises its own whims and ways into divine commandments, and if any neglect these, it cries, “Woe

unto them." There are, however, three other kings to help this lord of righteousness which opposes Israel. There is Piram, the wild ass, Japhia, outward show, and lastly Debir. The wild ass is a symbol of a wrangler in religion. Ishmael was named a wild-ass man (Gen. xvi. 12), and the character is defined as one whose "hand is against every man's hand, and every man's hand against him."

A person of profession in religion, but who clings to and cherishes the inner evils of the heart, has been well described as one who will write for religion, quarrel for religion, fight for religion, and die for religion, but will not live for religion.

Wrangle and outward show are poor substitutes for love to God and love to man. Yet they are by many unfortunately preferred. For them, inner regeneration has been often resisted by thousands and millions, and hecatombs of slaughter have been made in the names of wrangle and of outward show. The thirty years religious war of Germany, and the forty years of religious wars of France, all owed their virulence to superstition, quarrelsomeness, and outward show, which practised every abomination in the name of the Prince of Peace and purity. Debir, the last king, means the Word, because there must be some apparent acknowledgment of the Word, at least, for any system of professed religion to be maintained.

Such are the powers that sustain forms of religion which resist regeneration, and teach that the inner virtues of the heart are of no real necessity in preparing for heaven.

But in the struggles of the soul, when we appeal in earnest to the Lord Jesus to come and help us against these, He quickly appears. He travels all night, and early in the morning overthrows the tempting powers.

It is sad to reflect that a profession of religion should be made the means of defeating the sacred ends of religion itself, yet so it is. The work of religion is to change the outward life and inward affections, from evil to good, from disorder to order, from being selfish to being heavenly. If we fail in this, we fail in everything, so far as our eternal good is concerned. Yet the religion of a large portion of mankind is such as to divert the soul from this one thing needful, and to interest it in things really of very inferior importance, if of any value at all; such as pilgrimages, the use of relics, rivetting the attention overweeningly upon the ceremonies and outward services of religion, to the neglect of the priceless attainments of a temper that cannot be roused to anger, of just principles that will not turn aside from

integrity or stoop to meanness or dishonour for any consideration, and a life of truth, purity, and faithfulness to every duty and engagement.

Just as with one class of professing Christians the REGENERATION of the soul is neglected, and trivial forms and forgiveness by the priest, instead of change of heart, relied on, so by another class, faith in the merits of the Lord, and excitement, are made the all in all of Christian duty. You are not to do anything, Christ has done everything. You have only to believe, and that instant you are saved, and made white as an angel. The intense joy felt at being liberated from the dread of torments, excruciating for the natural man to contemplate, and the offspring of unbridled imagination in preachers, who imagine the most repulsive horrors, and revel in them while they brandish them over the sinners head, often hides the evils ingrained in a man's inner dispositions from himself, and they only slowly show themselves when the excitement has passed away, and with the advance of age. How often, as years increase, does amiability grow less! How often do worry and irascibility make aged Christians painful burdens to themselves and others, and the decline of life not like a glorious autumn, rich and smiling, with an abundant harvest of virtues and graces, but cold, hard, and bitter, like a premature winter!

These deadly results are inevitable unless we hasten up under the leadership of Joshua and come upon the kings of our spiritual Amorites—the lusts which dwell in the mountains, and who are headed by a lord of false righteousness, who speak of woe, instead of joy in doing good; who are quarrelsome and contentious, instead of living in charity; and who make an outward show of religion, instead of rooting out evil tempers within, and cultivating in every act of life, meekness, truth, virtue, and good will to all men.

Joshua's march all night from Gilgal, and sudden appearance with his host before the army of the confederates, represents the Lord's presence with us in the interiors of the soul, preparing for victory while we are yet in doubt and darkness. Gilgal was about three miles within the Jordan, its name signifies a wheel, and it represents a state in which everything is prepared for progress, for the rejection of evil, and for advancement in good.

Startled by the presence and vigorous onset of the great leader, the man of courage and decision, the enemies broke and fled. They were slain with a great slaughter, and chased along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon (the house of wrath),

the upper, and as they fled down to Beth-horon the nether.

The rocky pass, along which they fled, can easily be traced now. And as they hurried away and sunk, they were the sublime symbols of the impotence of sin, when the Lord's help is faithfully used. From within to without, evil becomes powerless in the glow of holy zeal. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth up against thee, thou shalt condemn."

The hail-stones the Lord cast down upon them (ver. 11), as they fled to Azekah (the strength of walls), represent condemnatory truths, which descend copiously while evils are yet trying to excuse themselves; and the pursuit to Makkedah where the kings took refuge in a cave represents the utter exhaustion of the evil; the name itself signifying exhaustion.

While Joshua saw the discomfited foe flying along the formidable defiles, and felt the unspeakable value of that day's deliverance, he longed for a prolongation of the day, and taking up the divine poetry of the book of Jasher, he exclaimed, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon."

That which was spiritually expressive in the book of Jasher of the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom, the sun and moon of the soul illuminating it, until the false and evil which had imperilled it were subdued, was actually represented before his eyes. The sun and moon appeared to stand still, so as to lengthen the day, until the wild host of Israel's enemies was utterly scattered and destroyed. In the same way, as every evening to lengthen our day, the sun appears above the horizon by refraction in the atmosphere twenty minutes after he has actually gone down; in the same way as in the north, frequently another sun, or two other suns appear by refraction, quite as bright as the real sun. So to the senses of the children of Israel, and as far as they knew, the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

So will it be with us, when we make decisive battle with our mental foes. The Divine Love and Divine Wisdom will give us light in all the trial. They will not go down for the whole day. The Divine Love will smile upon our affections, our hill of Gibeon; the Divine Wisdom will rest upon our valley of Ajalon, or valley of the harts, which the name signifies, while we are yearning for that wisdom, as the hart panteth for the water-brooks; and these gracious encouragements will continue until evil lies fully subdued within us, and no enemy of the Lord remains to trouble our Canaan within.

SERMON LX.

THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

“And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.”—Joshua xxiv. 29, 30.

It was a solemn and wonderful scene that was presented at Shechem when Joshua was about to die. The brave and single-hearted leader of the tribes was about to quit the people whom he had loved and led to victory. The heads, the elders, the judges, and the officers were all about him. He, a chief actor in the astonishing events by which Israel had been made a nation, and become settled in the land so long the object of promise and of hope, was about to quit them for the still better country above, and he desired to give them his counsel and his blessing. He was the same man in death that he had been in life—calm, brave, and decided. There is no trace of fear through the whole discourse. There is only in Joshua thankfulness, faithfulness, and trust. May we die the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like his. Two lessons pervade the whole of the discourse of the dying leader—faithfulness to God, and courage in maintaining what is good. These were the traits of his character during his life. When others were timid, hesitating, and fearful, again and again Joshua stood undauntedly forth, ready to brave any danger which faithfulness required to be confronted. Nothing made him quail. Numbers, giants, strong walls, were all alike to him. Brave himself, he communicated courage to the fainting, and on several occasions prevented the trembling and timid from falling utterly away.

How strongly this was brought out when the ten disheartened spies brought their ignoble report, after their forty days' exploration of the glorious country they had been sent to search. They

querulously told of nothing but dangers. "We be not able to go up against the people ; for they are stronger than we. The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants. And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."—Num. xiii. 31—33. The whole host would then have perished but for Joshua and the noble Caleb. They heard the craven account with indignation. They rent their clothes with horror, and exclaimed, although the congregation were exasperated and threatening, and in their intense fright, were ready to put to death those who would tell them the truth, yet the faithful and true men named spoke out, "The land which we passed through to search, it is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us ; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord ; neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us ; their defence has departed from them, and the Lord is with us : fear them not."—Num. xiv. 7—9. At Rephidim, at Jericho, at Ai, at Beth-horon, and at Merom, the same spirit flamed forth in the glorious chief ; and now in his old age, and in his dying moments, we cannot fail to recognize the qualities which had distinguished him throughout his whole career. "Be ye very courageous," he said, "to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left. No man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand : for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you."

It is worthy of observation, that Divine Providence always excites us to improvement, by strengthening in us whatever is good in our natural character, as well as by leading us to repress all that is evil. Joshua was naturally brave. In the charges given to him, the Divine Being appeals to and strengthens this quality by the assurance that He would always be present with His valiant servant to defend him. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life : as it was with Moses so I will be with thee : I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." "Be strong and of good courage." "Only be thou strong and very courageous." "Have not I commanded thee ? Be strong, and of good courage ; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whither-

soever thou goest." These charges evidently appeal to the native virtues of the heroic Joshua, and strengthened in him his already noble qualities, and thus prepared him for the distinguished part of conquering the hostile tribes which formed Israel's deadliest foes within the promised land, and of settling the new possessors in their acquired territories; thus completing the grand work begun by Moses. The one freed and disciplined the nation; the other crowned the glorious enterprize with success. The one did the outer work, and died outside the land; the other went forward and did the inner work, and died in the midst of the magnificent possessions his faithfulness and fearlessness had won. The latter had the laurel of complete success. Joshua also regulated and arranged the boundaries of each tribe, putting all things into order, and enforcing that persevering attention to a complete conquest in the boundaries of each tribe which would at length give them entire and lasting peace.

Having finished these noble works, the grand old man came to die, or rather to rise to a higher life, and he gave his parting charge. He was no fatalist, nor a man to dishonour human freedom. He exhorted the whole people to CHOOSE the Lord, and obey Him from love.—ver. 15. He spoke from the experience of one hundred and ten years—he spoke to those whom he had led in sunshine and in storm—he spoke of the wonders which he had known, done by the Lord to men who had also known them, and he gave them this dying exhortation, with which he finished his noble life: "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, CHOOSE you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."—ver. 14, 15.

He finally set up a stone, the symbol of Divine Truth, to witness in future ages to the impressive lesson he had given them, he then let all the people depart to their hard-won inheritance, and he passed to his more glorious home above.

We must not omit to notice the information, that Joshua himself wrote the account of the events in which he had so largely figured, and added them to the books of the law written by Moses.—ver. 26. "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God." Thus giving a warrant for the literal

truth of the Sacred Narrative of the most conclusive kind—the dying testimony of the chief actor, and the greatest mind, associated with the events themselves, addressed to thousands of living witnesses. The book of Joshua being the Doomsday Book of the tribes, arranging and fixing their several boundaries and possessions, would also interest them in its exact preservation, and evinces again the care of Divine Providence, that His Word should in every way be consistent with human freedom, be preserved from loss or damage; and remain the sacred basis of that spirit and life which are now unveiled for Christians. The conquest of Canaan thus, will be the shadow going before, of that self-conquest in the heart, which the Spirit of the Lord Jesus enables every humble Christian to effect, that he may be meet for the kingdom of heaven.

That Joshua spiritually represents the power of the Lord Jesus, and its working in the heart, may not only be conceived from the position he held of the companion and successor of Moses, just as the spirit of the Gospel is the companion and successor of the law, but it would be confirmed by the fact that in the New Testament Joshua is several times called Jesus. The Hebrew Joshua and the Greek Jesus are indeed the same name. We have instances of this in Acts vii. 45, Heb. iv. 8, where Joshua is called Jesus.

The name of Joshua at first was Oshea, see Num. xiii. 16, but when he received his charge to go with the others into the land of Canaan and inspect it with a view to its entire purification and conquest, his name was altered by the addition of Je, from Jehovah, and so became Jehoshua. Oshea or Oshua signifies salvation; Jehoshua implies Jehovah our salvation. And as the Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah as our Saviour, we may see how truly the Lord Jesus in the soul by His Holy Spirit is the true Divine Joshua, the driver out of all those interior evils which infest the inner regions of the soul, as the Amorites were entrenched in the mountain lands, especially of Judea.

When Joshua had finished his labours, and was waiting to be translated to heaven, he foreshadowed for us the state of the Christian when the Spirit of the Saviour has done His work in him, and he approaches his rest. No giant lust remains; no pride, no passion, no impurity, no impatience even are left. He is going quietly to rest. Joshua is going to die in him, or rather, to rise up to higher life. The angelic idea of death is resurrection—to men we die, to angels we rise.

“Mortals say a man is dead, angels a child is born.”

The Lord dies in us when He rises to higher life, and to more regal and interior control over all our affections and thoughts. There is a remarkable saying by Himself in the Gospel,—“And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”—John xii. 32. When the Lord is lifted up in us, He is enthroned in our central affections, the golden sceptre of His love and wisdom waves over us, and He draws all other things in us to Himself. This elevation in the soul is meant by the death of Joshua; it is the state in which He is glorified in us, and becomes to us our Love, our Light, our All-in-all.

The age of Joshua of one hundred and ten years has its spiritual signification. Compound numbers are like the simple ones from which they come, for in spiritual things, as indeed in material ones, greater masses are only repetitions of the same elements which constitute smaller ones. One hundred and ten has therefore the same signification as eleven; it represents a state near completion, twelve representing that which is altogether full.

The twelve hours of the day represent complete regeneration, the eleventh not quite, but nearly complete. In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, our Lord describes the eleventh hour labourers as acquiring their silver reward in one hour, as much as the first who had been toiling all the day, and even a higher reward than the others, for the last, He said, should be first. The reason was, the whole labour of the vineyard represented the whole regeneration of the soul, the eleventh hour labourers those exalted affections which are brought into activity when the inner work of the soul is nearly over. Joshua, then, died at the age of one hundred and ten years, to be the type of the Lord Jesus about to rise into the interiors of the soul, and be there a sun that would never go down, when the days of the soul's mourning would for ever be ended (Isa. lx. 20), the Sun of Righteousness, who would then have arisen with healing in His wings.

Timnath-Serah is in Hebrew, *the portion that remaineth*, and we can hardly doubt its being selected to be the burial place of Joshua, because of its name and situation so strikingly representing the rest, the peaceful rest of the soul, which the Apostle speaks of, and which he says remaineth for the people of God.—Heb. iv. 9. Another name for the same place, as we learn in Judges was, Timnath-Heres, that is, *the portion of the sun*, and thus it again represents that state of interior peace in which the soul feels itself in the sunny land of Divine Love, the inner

mount Ephraim on which shines the perpetual glory of the light and blessing of the All-good—this is the mount of which it may be indeed said that it verifies the truth,

“Though round its breast the rolling clouds may spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

But the Divine Word is still more specific in naming the spot where the remains of Joshua were interred, and no doubt for reasons of a spiritual character. He was buried, it is said on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

Gaash is one of the Hebrew terms meaning *trouble* or *commotion*. The hill of trouble, spiritually, would be the spirit of good to which we cling in trouble. If it were not that we have some little confidence in the Lord left, some little affection for right, some little hope, some little trust in the divine mercy and providence of Him who is our Heavenly Father and Redeemer, we should utterly fail and be overwhelmed. This inner spirit of good is meant by a mountain and hill in many parts of the Word. This is the mountain spoken of by the Psalmist, “Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.”—Ps. xxx. 7. The hill Mizar, or the hill of *humility*, which is mentioned in another psalm, is expressive of the same spirit of good which is present with us in states of tribulation and anguish,—“O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.”—Ps. xlii. 6.

On the occasion of the trial of Abraham on Mount Moriah, it is said, that “he called the name of that place, the Lord will provide,” and it is written, “To this day in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”—Gen. xxii. 14.

In the spirit of inward good, which is present with us in the grievous hours of sorrow and trial, it is always written, “The Lord will provide.” There, to this day, it may be seen.

The hill of Gaash, or hill of trouble, then, we presume means the same spirit of inward good, which sustains the soul in tribulation, and forms a centre from which in good time can come consolation and lasting peace.

To bury Joshua on the border of his inheritance to the north of the hill of Gaash, would be, in its spiritual application, to extend the influence of the Lord Jesus beyond the region of trouble in the soul, to the very extremes of the mind; that is to say, there would be an extreme sanctification of the character

in word and work. Where there had been trouble there should be peace. There would be a lifting up of the Lord inward, and His divine radiance would extend outward. The principles of heaven would take root downward and bear fruit upward; the Lord who rules in the highest heaven of the soul, would also rule in the lowest earth; so that whether we eat or drink, we should do all for the glory of God.

Such, then, is the series of lessons afforded us by the description of the death and burial of Israel's valiant leader, of him who defeated their foes in the bosom of their God-given land. And in concluding our meditations on his character, and on the whole range of divine things opened to us by the journey from Egypt to Canaan, let us especially reflect on the success which arose from the unhesitating valour of Joshua. He came, he saw, he conquered, was equally true of him as it was of the renowned Roman. Similar bravery for the right, similar single-heartedness when truth points the way, would realize similar blessings with us much sooner than we after attain them.

We fail often in making progress because we hesitate, we are fearful. We see the right course, but we still delay, as if there could be danger where truth leads, and goodness beckons us on. O! for a spirit of simple trustful faith and love, which was so great in Joshua; then would many a sin fall swiftly prostrate, which is often a plague to us for years. Not a man of them would stand long before us, but a speedy victory would be ours in every temptation, and we should realize much more fully, and much sooner than we do, entire virtue and everlasting peace. He who touches the nettle feebly, smarts; to him who seizes it boldly it readily yields.

How many there are who view their leading sin as something they cannot give up without some great detriment, or cannot give up just now. It is implied to be somehow an essential part of their being or their well-being, and they must be very careful in giving it up. On the other hand, some good step, the adoption of some virtuous course, is a matter for slow resolution and great hesitation, as though some great danger were to be feared.

On the contrary, sin is an abortion, a wen, a curse; it has no right in creation—it is an aberration from order. It is described in Scripture by every term that can express what is hurtful and loathsome; it is a serpent, a dragon, a satyr, a wolf, a fox, a plague, leprosy, poison, a thorn, a sting, death, and hell. It is that which destroys a father's goodness and a mother's love. It turns children into vipers, incipient angels into fiends confirmed;

it sours tempers, withers the bliss of families, brings grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, and assimilates earth to the dark abodes of demons.

Is there then any reason for which we should spare it for a moment? Ought we not in prayer and in effort to assail whatever in us partakes of the evil kingdom, and say with the psalmist, "Do I not hate them O Lord that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies." To hate outward foes is wrong, but to abhor and abominate our sins of mind and heart is the truest wisdom. Of them we should say, "Search me O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Why, too, should there be so much hesitation in the adoption of a Christian course? Why not dare at once to do that which we see to be good? What a marvellous instance of weakness does Agrippa give us when Paul pleaded with him, and he exclaimed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Almost—why not altogether? Why hesitate? Hear the Lord Himself, saying, "O, 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. He should have fed them also with the fat of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."

Many, who like Festus, say, "I will hear thee again at a more convenient season," might if they decided at once, tear up sins by the roots, that often ramify and curse for many a year.

The convenient season is JUST NOW; when truth has shown us a wrong, and if we are faithful and fearless under the direction of our blessed Lord and Saviour, we shall secure years of peace, years of progress, years of usefulness, which otherwise would be worse than wasted. Let us, then, in His name avow His truth and obey it AS SOON AS WE clearly perceive it. Let us venture our all, cast our every care upon Him, and the result will be, our entrance into such a Canaan as will be to us a land flowing with milk and honey interiorly in this life of time, and we shall live fully and everlastingly in His kingdom above.



