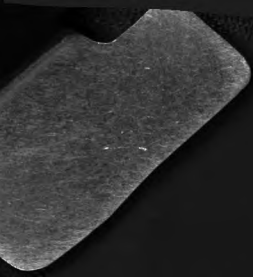




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# SERMONS

EXPOSITORY AND PRACTICAL

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# SERMONS

EXPOSITORY AND PRACTICAL

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BRUCE

AUTHOR OF "COMMENTARY ON ST. MATTHEW"

THIRD EDITION

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SERMONS  
EXPOSITORY AND PRACTICAL



## SERMON I.

### JESUS OUR EXAMPLE.

“Learn of me.”—MATT. xi. 29, second clause.

WE are brought into existence destitute of all things that go to form our mental being, but are endowed with faculties by which we have the power of acquiring them. This power resides in the faculties of loving, of knowing, and of imitating. The means of our improvement through the agency of others answer to these faculties. We are improved by the influence of love, by the light of truth, and by the force of example. Love attracts us, truth instructs us, example leads us. In every department and occupation, and almost in every act of life, these means must be united, in order to produce a useful, and anything like a perfect result. Without the last the others would accomplish but little, and do it imperfectly. Love and truth without example, if we could conceive it possible entirely to separate them, would be but feeble instructors. The imitative faculty comes so early into activity, and is so strong, that we must regard it as

one of the most efficient as well as direct mediums of instruction. By the power of imitation the child acquires the use of language, as the vehicle of thought and means of rational intercourse, and is led almost insensibly to adopt the habits and manners of the society in which he lives, the very cast and expression of the countenance being more or less the reflection of those which he is accustomed to behold.

But the influence of example is not confined to the living model or the practical instructor. We treasure up the memory of the great and good, and we hold them up to admiration, that others, especially the young, may be inspired by their example to strive after excellence in wisdom or in goodness. We preserve their works, we recount their deeds; we consider the difficulties and discouragements they had to contend with, the self-denial and patient labour they had to undergo; and we never fail to derive advantage from their triumphs, though we may have no hope of attaining to their greatness. It is not, however, from successful exertion only that we may learn wisdom. The sufferer for conscience' sake, the martyr to principle, are as noble examples, and as worthy of imitation, as the prosperous labourer or the triumphant genius. If we learn perseverance from the one, we learn endurance from the other. As no one man can possess all excellencies, or possess all in an equal degree, we have to look to different men as examples of excellence in different virtues, or as exemplifying some particular virtue under peculiar circumstances. There was only one who ever united all excellence in him-





self, and who was therefore capable of being the pattern to men of all virtue under all circumstances. Need I say that one was the Lord Jesus Christ? He alone lived a life holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners. His enemies could not convict him of sin. He was tried in the furnace of affliction as no other man was ever tried, yet he never spake unadvisedly with his lips, nor showed signs of impatience. He fulfilled, under the most trying circumstances, every jot and tittle of the law; and left an example of perfect love, obedience, and endurance, for the encouragement and imitation of his followers.

It is true that the Lord Jesus, though truly man, was also truly God, having the divinity dwelling within him, which rendered it in the nature of things impossible for him to fall under temptation, or come short in the fulfilment of the law. And this may appear to place him too far above us to be our example, and to render any attempt on our part to imitate him hopeless. This has been made the ground of an objection to his divinity. But the assumption on which it rests is fallacious. It cannot be admitted as a truth that one who can be a proper example to men must himself be no more than man, nor that the attempt to imitate a perfect being is hopeless in those who can never attain perfection. Men do not argue and act thus in the ordinary concerns of life. The artist imitates the rainbow and paints the setting sun, although he has not the most distant hope of rivalling the brilliant hues of the one or the gorgeous splendour of the other. It is the very

perfection of nature which leads to continual imitation, and makes art progressive—which leaves room for every age and for every individual imitator to exert their powers to the utmost, without the possibility of ever attaining or even approaching absolute perfection. Had Jesus Christ been a mere man, he might have been an example to one age, but could hardly have been an example to all ages. It would have been possible for some at least of His disciples to have not only equalled but surpassed him; and he who excelled his master would be entitled to take his place. It is because the Lord was God-Man that he was a perfect example, whose life will continue to be the pattern of all excellence, which men, in the progress of general and individual improvement, may continually approach, but can never reach. The inherent dignity of the Lord's nature, and the height from which he descended to show as well as teach us our duty, give a peculiar value and force to his life as an example. He who descends from a high station to take upon himself the form of a servant, dignifies the humble office he assumes, and makes the law and the duties of the office honourable; stimulates all to exertion, and renders the slothful and the proud inexcusable. With what force from such a one must the words come, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

The Lord's example, like his teaching, is not to be looked for so much in particular instances, as in

the manifestation, throughout his whole life, of high and holy principles. We must not, therefore, expect to find a particular act any more than a particular rule for our guidance in every minute action or circumstance of life. Such a model and such a directory would make our imitation mechanical. Our imitation is to be rational. We must endeavour to imbibe the spirit of the Lord's actions as well as the spirit of his teaching, and make that the spirit of our own. We must endeavour, as the apostle advises, to have the same mind in us which was also in him; and then shall we find in the Lord's holy and beneficent life all that is required for our guidance as his disciples. Our sphere of activity and the measure of our experience may have little circumstantial resemblance to those of the Lord, yet the spirit and the manner of his active and passive obedience will clearly show how we ought to act and how to suffer. In all his actions and in all his sufferings we see exemplified the same pure love, the same high purpose, the same inflexible integrity, the same meekness, lowliness of heart, perfect forgiveness. To cultivate these as principles, and to manifest them in practice, is the way to follow the example of our Saviour. The disciple, whatever station he occupies, whatever relation he sustains, whatever vocation he follows, may walk with the Lord every day and hour of his life, and learn of him how to act in every duty and emergency. To attempt, as some enthusiasts have done, to imitate the Lord in the course of life which he followed, and the works he performed, were mere presumption and folly. It were

to aim at equality rather than imitation, and would make false Christs instead of true disciples. Let every one, then, look to the Lord as his moral example, and endeavour faithfully to follow him in the innocence and usefulness, though not necessarily in the manner, of his life. Then will the inspired record of his life on earth afford the most ample means to guide as well as to direct us in the path of duty, and enable us to walk in the footsteps of him who is the way, as well as the truth and the life.

But, although we must not expect to find every step in life marked out for us by the Lord, we may find the path of duty traced with sufficient distinctness in the map of the Lord's sojourn upon earth, to enable us to feel assured at every step that this is the way, and that we may walk with confidence in it.

We shall, therefore, endeavour to trace some of the footsteps of the great Redeemer, that we may learn of him where and how we ought to walk.

Little as is recorded of the early life of Jesus, that little is sufficient to enable the young to acquire some great lessons of duty from his example. In one short and simple narrative, in the second chapter of Luke, some important points in the character and conduct of the youthful Saviour are exhibited, which the young would do well to imitate. Jesus, it is said, increased in wisdom as he increased in stature or in age. And should not every youth follow his example in this? Wisdom, Solomon testifies, is the principal thing—the chief acquisition of life—its grand means of usefulness—its support and ornament. Wisdom, of which the fear

of the Lord is the beginning, must be sought early to be sought successfully, and cultivated habitually to be acquired sufficiently. As an evidence of the early wisdom of Jesus, and of his desire to increase it, we find him at the age of twelve in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. We must not suppose that Jesus was engaged, as it is sometimes said, disputing with the doctors. His questions, we may suppose, were searching, but they were no doubt respectful; and his demeanour towards the authorities of the Jewish Church was no doubt in accordance with the advice he afterwards gave to his disciples,—to hear and do all that was said by those who sat in Moses' seat, but not to do after their works. If the young desire to improve in wisdom, let them follow the Lord's example, and seek it among those who have knowledge and experience. Another instance of the true wisdom of Jesus at this period of his life is to be found in his conduct towards his mother and reputed father. When he quitted the temple and went down with Joseph and Mary, and came to Nazareth, it is recorded that "He was subject unto them." Jesus was at this time far beyond his natural and legal parents in wisdom as in goodness, yet he subjected himself to their authority, that he might show to his children, in all succeeding times, an example of filial obedience. He was now engaged in his Father's business—that of the Father who dwelt within him—yet he yielded submission to his earthly guardians, that he might, as in submitting to the outward rites of the church, fulfil all righteousness.

In these particulars the young may see the whole duties of their minority comprehended: to learn wisdom, to respect their teachers, to obey their parents.

If the Lord's early life, thus briefly touched on in the Evangelists, is yet pregnant with instruction to the young, his maturer years, much more amply described, cannot be less fruitful in practical lessons to those more advanced in life. When he began to be about thirty years of age, and appeared before the world as the great Teacher and Exemplar of the law, he raised the moral standard far above what it had been under the Jewish dispensation; and lived up to it both in the letter and the spirit. He showed that the end of the whole law, of the whole Word, was love to God and charity to man; and devoted his life to the advancement of the divine glory and of human happiness.

We speak of the Lord devoting his life to the advancement of the divine glory, and this language may appear inconsistent with the idea of an indwelling divinity. But we are to reflect, that although the divinity dwelt within him, it did not speak and act through him. The divine did not operate through the human as a passive instrument; but the human acted from the divine as a voluntary agent. The soul does not operate through the body—more properly, the inner man does not act through the outer man, as a passive subject; but the outer man receives the life of the inner man into itself, which it modifies according to its own affections and perceptions, and manifests that life as there felt and perceived. The Lord may therefore be justly spoken of as a man,

And he was indeed truly man, having not only all the faculties, but all the infirmities of our common nature, and subject to all the temptations and trials, and all the horrors of darkness and despair, that can oppress the troubled spirit in its strivings with the subtle powers of falsehood and evil. As such a man, the Lord was our example in his spotless life—a life not spent in solitude, where there is nothing to excite or to provoke the passions—not mortified by a severe but irrational asceticism,—but a life spent in the most active usefulness, amidst privations and persecutions, temptations and sufferings. It is such a life only that deserves to be called spotless and virtuous. Where there are no occasions of offence there is no merit in integrity. Where there is no good done to men there is no service rendered to God. The law may remain inviolate, but it remains unfulfilled. When the law and the prophets are severed from the two universal precepts on which they hang, the virtue that professes to fulfil them has no aim that comes within the scope of Revelation, or that embraces the end for which it was given. The Christian disciple must, therefore, like his Divine Master, live in the world, yet strive to keep himself from the evil. He must follow where the Lord has led, and where he still leads, and shrink neither from the duties nor the perils of life. He must regard usefulness as the end of his existence, and seek his happiness in endeavouring to make others happy. He must learn to know by experience that it is more blessed to give than to receive—to minister than to be ministered unto.

But let him not imagine that before he can experience this blessedness he must have something great to bestow, and some high function to exercise. The Lord, who exemplified as well as taught this great principle, was destitute of those means which men consider as indispensable to large benevolence and extensive usefulness; as if to show us how great services can be rendered to mankind by the simple power of love and truth. He, it is true, had resources which we have not, and powers which we do not possess. We cannot multiply the loaves and fishes to feed the hungry,—we cannot with a word open the eyes of the blind, or unstop the ears of the deaf, or cure the diseased, or raise the dead to life. But, although we have not the miraculous power to do these and other works which our Lord performed, we have the moral and intellectual power to do them to some extent. Industry can multiply the means of life, and justice and benevolence can equalize their distribution. Intelligence can raise the blind out of mental darkness, and the deaf out of mental solitude, by conveying to them, through other channels than the eye and the ear, the knowledge of which these organs are the created avenues, and can initiate them into useful arts and professions, by which they may be elevated above their naturally helpless condition. Human skill can, by the divine blessing, cure diseases, and though it cannot restore, can preserve life. Even in the exercise of his miraculous power, therefore, the Lord was our example. By these divine acts he taught us that it should be the aim of Christian benevolence



to remove, as far as our power and means enable us, the afflictions and miseries of our fellow-creatures.

But there is a moral and spiritual lesson in the Lord's miracles. There are states of the mind and of the soul analogous to these conditions and states of the body, which demand our sympathy and aid. The mind may be morally and the soul may be spiritually blind, and deaf, and diseased, and even dead. The Lord was eminently the physician of souls; and his great end in coming into the world was to open the understandings of men to the perception of his truth, and their wills to the love of his goodness—to restore all the faculties to a healthful condition, and to infuse new or spiritual life into all the thoughts and affections—to give a new heart and a right spirit. If we desire to follow the Lord's example we must also aim to perform this highest use to our fellow-immortals. The natural evils that afflict mankind, collectively and individually, are all effects, either directly or indirectly, from spiritual and moral causes; and while natural means are necessary for their immediate alleviation or correction, moral and spiritual means can alone go to the root of the disease.

Christian philanthropy is therefore the truest philanthropy, because it unites in its aims what is temporal and eternal. The Lord cured the afflicted, in some cases, by casting out demons; and demoniacal principles are now, as demoniacal possessions were then, the proximate cause of many of the evils that afflict humanity. To cast out such unclean spirits as lust, intemperance, profaneness, and such evil spirits as

envy, hatred, revenge, is part of the commission given by the Lord to every disciple, and which he is empowered to do in his name, and is encouraged to do by his example. Every true follower of the Lord Jesus is privileged to be a worker together with him in promoting the great work of human improvement, by removing some of the causes of human misery, and advancing the spiritual interests and temporal welfare of mankind. However limited his sphere or his means, his efforts will not be lost on men, nor will they be unrewarded by him who prized the widow's mite more than all the offerings which the rich cast into the treasury, and who pronounced a blessing on him who gives only a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of Christ. There is one important way in which all may equally aid in this good work. Every one can diminish the sum of moral and spiritual evil, by striving to remove his own, which will at once be securing an essential benefit to himself, improving others by his influence, and leading them by his example.

But there are other acts besides those of benevolence in which the Lord is to be regarded as our pattern in the Christian life. He exemplified as well as taught those lessons which it is most important for us to learn and practice.

No evil is more natural to us than pride; no virtue is more difficult to learn than humility. Pride, the first-born of self-love, is directly opposed to the spirit of Christianity; and, of course, to the example of Christ. It was in immediate reference to his humility

that Jesus called upon the weary of his hearers to learn of him. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." No promise could be more appropriate in this case than rest. For the pride of self-love knows no repose—its desires have no bounds. Like Lucifer, it would exalt its throne above the stars. It was this principle which lay at the foundation of man's first desire to be as God, knowing good and evil. It was this principle which led the Pharisee to thank God that he was not as other men. It was this which led the disciples to dispute among themselves which should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord corrected this evil in his yet earthly followers by setting a little child in the midst, and saying, "Whoever will be converted, and become as this little child, the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven." True greatness arises out of humility. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. True greatness consists in doing others service. "He that would be greatest among you, let him be your servant, and he that would be chief among you, let him be your minister." Who are the truly great men upon earth? Those who render the greatest and most disinterested service to mankind. In this, as in every other virtue, and in every other respect, the Lord himself was the greatest, because he was the least of all, and the servant of all.

But the Lord's invitation is not only addressed to those who labour under the oppressive yoke of false-

hood and evil, but to those, also, who have acquired a sense of the galling and degrading nature of the service of sin. Those who so far feel the unrest which a consciousness of sin produces, are in a state to listen to the Lord's invitation. When the conscience is burdened with a sense of sin, or the spirit is weary with the cruel mockeries of falsehood, the soul is prepared to appreciate the rest which the Lord's righteousness and truth confer. The yoke which he lays upon us is easy, and his burden is light. But to feel them to be so we must become, like him, meek and lowly of heart; for thus only can we find rest unto our souls. Meekness and humility are peculiarly becoming in the disciples of Jesus, who, while the Most High God, was the most lowly man that ever trod the earth. The soul finds rest when the disturbing elements of self-righteousness and self-intelligence are renounced, and we place ourselves at the feet of Jesus to learn of him, and to follow his example.

The Lord seems to have been most desirous to impress the lesson of humility and service on the minds of his disciples. It was one of the last which he practically taught them. That beautiful act—his washing the disciples' feet—an act which marked the greater condescension as being performed by servants of the lowest class—was well adapted to impress them with a deep sense of the duty and the beauty of humility. And, often afterwards, when contemplating and worshipping the Lord in his glory, must they have thought of that night when he girded himself with a towel, and took a basin, and washed the feet of his

humble followers, closing his lowly and significant labour with the words, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. The servant is not greater than his Lord. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." If humility was a grace eminently characteristic of the Saviour, it little becomes us to be proud—to think ourselves righteous, and despise others—to seek to exalt ourselves at the expense of others. It is this principle of self-exaltation that lies at the root of hatred, revenge, unmercifulness; for it makes us quick to take offence, and implacable in our resentments. Humility, on the other hand, is the ground of every virtue; for it makes us teachable and obedient, patient and forgiving. In all these the Lord was our example. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

In treating of the Lord as our example, we would *should* leave the subject imperfect were we to pass over his sufferings, in which all the virtues of his holy life shone out with such brightness and purity. When we read in the Evangelists of the contempt and violence with which he was treated by the Jews, and of his temptations and his sufferings, we cannot but admire his passive even more than his active obedience. When, on his declaring his priority to Abraham, which the Jews justly understood to imply his divinity,

they took up stones to stone him, he mildly inquired for which of his good works they stoned him. When turning away from the ungrateful Jerusalem, he wept over the city, saying, "O Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" When the Samaritans did not receive him, and the mildest of his disciples wished to bring down a fire from heaven to consume them, he said, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." When taken by the soldiers, betrayed into their hands by one of his disciples, he reproved Peter for violent defence, and submitted to be seized as a prisoner; and when taken before the judgment-seat, he meekly submitted to personal indignity and torture. And when crucified as a malefactor, amidst insult and reproach, he spent his last breath in praying for his enemies: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." When we behold the Lord under all these circumstances, so trying to flesh and blood, yet possessing his soul in perfect patience, and showing the tenderest love for those by whom he was persecuted, we see in him an example of all that is pure, and good, and merciful, which should inspire us with a desire humbly to imitate him.

Let us not imagine that the divinity of Jesus fortified him against the ordinary feelings of humanity. The Lord suffered as a man and felt as a man. There

is reason, indeed, to believe that the physical, like the mental, sufferings of Jesus were greater than those of any other man. The finest natures have the keenest sensibilities, and delicate organizations have the acutest sensations. That the Lord was exquisitely sensible of pain is obvious from his agony in the garden, when "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The sufferings of Jesus, however, were more of mind than of body. His temptations from the whole powers of darkness were chiefly internal, and, in their intensity, to us inconceivable. If the Lord had far higher resources, he had far higher demands upon them; and there can be no doubt that the demands upon us as Christians are no greater in proportion to our power than were those of the Saviour himself.

Whether, then, we consider the Lord Jesus in his obedience, in his benevolence, or in his endurance, he is eminently our example; and we have the promise of being endued with power from on high, to enable us to perform our humble part with a fidelity and completeness corresponding to his own, that we may, in our degree, be perfect, even as he, our Father which is in heaven, is perfect. We have only to do our best to walk in the footsteps of our divine Saviour to insure a successful issue to our exertions; and, having followed him in the regeneration on earth, to sit down with him in his throne, his kingdom of righteousness and peace in heaven.

## SERMON II.

## THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ 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.”—ISAIAH xi. 6-9.

UNLIKE the angels, who live entirely in the present, we, who are yet dwellers on the earth, live much in the past and the future. It is not altogether that distance, on whichever side we look, lends enchantment to the view. It is not all illusion. It has too solid a basis in reality. It arises from the fact that the present state of the world, and generally of human life, is far below what we know of them in the past, and what we hope or long for them in the future. Revelation, confirmed by universal tradition, points back to a period in the world’s history when man lived in the undisturbed serenity of conscious innocence—



a state that was reflected in the expressive beauty of surrounding nature; and sacred prophecy and human aspiration point to a time when the earth shall be blessed with universal peace as the result of universal righteousness.

It is similar in most cases with the individual as with the race. The prevailing state of human life is such that most regard their present state as a barren and toiling wilderness, from which they look back to their early days as the Eden of their existence, and forward to the future as the Canaan of their promised rest.

Much of our knowledge and estimate of things being the result of comparison, we derive a certain advantage as well as satisfaction from thus looking to the past and the future. It brings before us the state from which our race has fallen, and that to which they are destined to rise, and makes us sensible of the distance we ourselves have, individually, receded from the peacefulness of early life, into the evils of a developed selfhood and anxieties of a worldly life; and it deepens our conviction of the necessity of striving after that peace which the world can neither give nor take away. This kind of living in the past and the future is neither unlawful nor unprofitable. It is incident to our fallen nature and probationary state, and enables us more clearly to distinguish our own present from that of the angels. Unlike the spirits of just men made perfect, our warfare is not yet accomplished. We have not simply to go on in the practice of goodness, but have to stand and struggle for the mastery

over evil. The state in which the angels repose is that for which the best of us are yet contending and toiling. Their present is still our future. Yet, if we look either to the past or the future, with the view of endeavouring to rise above our present imperfections, and pursue the course that leads to a happy eternity, we look and act rightly.

It is otherwise with those who live in the past and the future, not because they are dissatisfied with their present state, but because they are discontented with their present condition. These often spend the present in useless repining, or in dreaming of a happiness which they take no pains to realize. A considerable share of the impractical living in the future, which is found among the religious as well as among the worldly, arises from regarding sacred prophecy as relating only to some future, and perhaps far distant, state of the church. The cause of this is removed when it is understood that prophecy has a particular, as well as a general application, and may be accomplished in the individual members of the church, at this day as well as in the general church of the future. Our text is therefore descriptive of the peaceful state of a regenerate soul as truly as of a regenerate world. This is, indeed, its truest and most practical meaning. The individual work of regeneration is the only one by which the world can be improved; for what is a regenerated world but a world of regenerated people? Our hope for the future of our race has its surest ground in what we do to realize in ourselves that state which we delight to anticipate for the church in

after-ages. In this sense it is our intention to consider the present text.

If this remarkable prediction can be accomplished in a single mind, the various creatures, destructive and harmless, that are mentioned in it, must be symbols of different and opposite mental qualities of a corresponding character. The ferocious and predatory animals are types of the fierce and ruthless passions of our hereditary and unrenewed nature; while the gentle and useful are no less faithful images of the innocent and beneficent affections which we acquire from the Lord by regeneration. The taming of the ferocious and destructive animals, so as to render them harmless to the gentle and innocent creatures on whom they are accustomed to prey, as plainly and expressively typifies the bringing of our lusts and appetites so completely under the dominion of our better affections as to deprive them, if not of the inclination, at least of the power of doing injury to the principles of goodness and truth either in ourselves or in others.

The lusts and cupidities of our selfhood, which are to be brought under subjection to the good affections of our new nature, are of three kinds,—evils of the will, evils of the understanding, and evils of the life. These are the wolf, the leopard, and the young lion of our text. The symbolical character of these animals may be seen in their different natures, as they are represented in Scripture. The wolf is distinguished for its fierceness, the leopard for its treacherousness, the lion for its power. In the will evil is fierce, in the intellect it is treacherous, in the life it is powerful. In

the will evil exists as a fierce and cruel disposition, and when it breaks out in bursts of unrestrained passion, as in hatred and revenge, it is like a ravening wolf, seeking only to devour. But although evil comes forth at times from the heart in bursts of fierce, ungovernable passion, it more frequently seeks to accomplish its purpose through the cunning devices of a keen but perverted intellect; and, then, like the leopard, it seeks stealthily to ensnare to destruction. But evil which has its seat in those affections of our nature that lie nearest to the outward life, and which, when they are active, manifest themselves immediately in outward acts, and become by confirmation habits of life, is the most powerful. All such evils are in every one by nature, and in too many by practice.

It would be unwise, as well as unjust, to represent human nature as more corrupt than it is in reality. But he who knows what is in man has declared, both in the Old Testament and the New, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and that out of it proceed evils of every kind. If this is the case, we can hardly think too unfavourably of the state of the human heart as it is by nature. The truth of the divine declaration is abundantly confirmed by what we see before our eyes and feel within ourselves. All the evils which our Lord enumerated are daily committed in society; and they exist as vices in society only because they exist as lusts in men's hearts.

But although these evils prevail to a fearful extent in human society, and must therefore exist as un-

governed lusts in many human hearts, are we to conclude that they are necessarily present in all hearts as inborn inclinations? Must we suppose that in the bosom of the peaceful and smiling infant, or of the loving and playful child, or even of the generous and ingenuous youth, there is the den of the lion and the hole of the asp, with these fierce and subtle creatures slumbering or hiding therein? Yes; even there the wolf, and the leopard, and the young lion have their lurking places, and there, too, are the poisoned asp, and the cockatrice' egg that may become a fiery flying serpent. They are in the minds of the young as hereditary inclinations, which grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength; and which, unless prevented by timely reformation, will eventually come forth in fierce, and cunning, and deadly acts of sinfulness.

But how are these inclinations, so deadly in their nature, kept in abeyance, so long as the human being, in whom they are ingenerate, is yet young and tender, and unable himself to comprehend their nature, or resist their power? This truly wonderful effect is secured by a divine provision, as beneficent as it is wise. These inclinations to evil would indeed prove too powerful for the mind that inherits them, did not the Lord in his mercy provide for the early insinuation into it of countervailing good and gentle affections, with the growth of a suitable intelligence, and the formation of correct habits. But for these, the human being, pure, and almost heavenly, as he seems in infancy, would grow up into a creature as savage in

disposition, as brutish in intellect, as hideous in aspect, as the most dreaded of the denizens of the forest.

What, then, are those good and gentle affections which thus early form a countervailing power against our hereditary inclinations, and which predispose and capacitate the tender mind for receiving the elements of those spiritual principles by which evil may be eventually overcome ?

The first and purest of the affections by whose influence ingenerate evils are kept under restraint is the innocence of infancy. This is not a natural affection, but is breathed into the infant soul by him who is innocence itself; and it comes through the heaven of innocence, composed of the highest and purest of the celestial angels. By these angels the infant is surrounded with a sphere of innocence and peace that preserves it from the disturbing influence of malignant spirits, who, were they permitted, would excite into activity the latent evil inclinations of the infant mind, and rend the soul in pieces. The sphere of innocence with which the infant is surrounded has the power, at the same time, of affecting the minds of its earthly guardians, and more especially of the maternal parent, whose tender care and beneficent offices, as a nurse, bring her into a more direct and close connection with her young charge. The warm endearments of her love first awaken reciprocal affections in the infant heart, and are the means of implanting in it the first and tenderest germ of celestial love.

Another countervailing affection imparted to the young mind is the innocence of childhood. The lead-

ing character of this state of innocence is the love of parents. The intellect now begins to be active, as well as the heart. A sense of intellectual want shows itself in the desire to learn and the patience to listen; while the dawn of intelligence is displayed in the curious question and reflective remark. In this stage of life we see also the germ and image of a celestial faith, in the perfect conviction which the child has in the unbounded and unerring wisdom of the parents, and his implicit reliance on the truth of whatever falls from their lips.

A third affection implanted in the young mind is the innocence of youth. It is marked by ingenuousness and warm mutual attachments. The activities of the mind, which have hitherto been spontaneous, now begin to be voluntary, and an inquisitive reason begins to take the place of an implicit faith. A desire for knowledge takes the place of a love of information; and the wondering delight with which the mind is affected by the acquisition of learning leads to the admiring love of teachers. The determination of the powers of both mind and body to vigorous action, forms, when rightly directed, the elements of a wise and useful manhood.

These may seem to be no more than the natural stages of human development, which take place, almost as a matter of course, when the human being is placed in favourable external circumstances. Favourable circumstances are certainly necessary for the growth of the mind, while those of an opposite character not only dwarf but distort it. They are, indeed, part of the

means which Providence supplies and employs for working out his beneficent purposes. But the point we are now considering is the Lord's wisdom and goodness in imparting to the young mind, both by inward and outward means, the pure and innocent affections which, being adapted to the earlier stages of progressive life, prevent the evil inclinations of their hereditary fallen nature from rising up and taking entire and undisputed possession of the soul. The heaven-derived affections thus serve to control the evils which are the inheritance of every child of man.

These innocent and pure affections are the lamb, the kid, and the fatling, with which the wolf, the leopard, and the young lion lie down. By the Lord's infinite mercy the evils inherent in our nature, in themselves of the most cruel and destructive character, are thus held in comparative quiescence by the different degrees of innocence successively implanted in the human mind.

There is one feature in the beautiful imagery employed in this prediction, which must not be allowed to pass without remark. The wolf, the leopard, and the young lion are not represented as lying down with the sheep, the goat, and the bullock, which might be more able to resist them; but with the lamb, the kid, and the calf, which are more unsuspecting and defenceless. The wisdom of this will be perceived when we reflect that the young of any creature represents the principle of which that creature is the emblem, with the additional or increased element of innocence; and the more that any good principle partakes of innocence, the greater is its power of resisting and controlling evil



There is a peculiar beauty in this imagery when applied to the affections implanted and the states formed in the minds of the young; the lamb, the kid, and the fatling then symbolizing the several good affections that are received in the innocence of infancy, childhood, and youth, and which descend into the mind from God out of heaven. This divine and heavenly work, performed by the Lord's wisdom and goodness in the soul during the early period of human life, is most important, as preparatory to its actual regeneration in adult ages. The work of regeneration may thus be said to commence at birth. Then the germs of the future spiritual life begin to be formed—the foundation of an eternal habitation to be laid. It is only reasonable that it should be so. Can we suppose that divine grace performs no saving work in the immortal soul till man has lived out half his days in this preparatory and probationary world? God's love and wisdom are infinitely concerned for every human soul, and must be ever infinitely active in doing all that an infinitely perfect being can do to prepare it for a happy immortality. All the necessary agencies in heaven and earth must be brought by Divine Providence to bear upon the human being, to promote the one end of his earthly existence—his everlasting happiness. Nor can any prevent the successful termination of this work of infinite love, but that soul itself on which the Lord operates for its salvation; and this can be done only by an act of free determination in adult age. It is, no doubt, chiefly for the sake of this most important divine work in the soul during early life that man is

so long in arriving at mature life. The protracted period of his infancy, childhood, and youth, affords the opportunity of more being done for the soul than the soul would or could for itself, if man attained an earlier maturity. Hereditary evils are longer held in a state of comparative inactivity, and the state of preparation for actual conflict with them when they become active and rebellious is more complete.

But the time does come when the evils of our nature come into activity, not the involuntary activity of childhood, but the voluntary activity of manhood and womanhood. Then, also, it is that a new and greater power is required to control them, and not only to control, but to subdue them. If the innocence of early life cannot prevent the evil of our nature from eventually rising up into an activity that would lead to every kind of wickedness, that innocence cannot subdue it when it has once risen in its power. When evil has once acquired such power, innocence of a higher order or degree is required to effect its subjection; and, being required, it is provided. This higher and more perfect innocence is the little child that "leads" the wolf, and the leopard, and the young lion, in company with the lamb, the kid, and the fatling. While the savage beasts "lie down," they lie down with harmless animals; but when they rise up and go forth, they are led by a little child. A higher innocence is required to control the passions in action than to keep them inactive. This higher innocence is the innocence of wisdom, and of this innocence a child is the emblem.

But in our text there is mention, not of one little

child only, but of three little children. Besides the little child that leads out the wolf, the leopard, and the young lion, there is the sucking child that plays on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child that puts his hand on the cockatrice' den. As there are three kinds or degrees of the innocence of ignorance, which are implanted in the mind in early life, there are three kinds or degrees of the innocence of wisdom that belong to adult age, being acquired during regeneration. As the lamb, the kid, and the calf are symbols of the three degrees of innocence that belong to early life, the three little children are symbols of the three corresponding degrees of innocence that belong to adult age. The innocence of childhood, sweet and beautiful as it is, is not, strictly speaking, human innocence; for nothing is properly human but that which is loved, believed, and done from liberty and according to reason. The innocence of childhood is therefore fitly represented by animals, while that higher innocence which belongs to the age of liberty and reason is truly represented by infants and little children. Each kind of innocence has its own peculiar use to perform. We have seen the use performed by the innocence of infancy and childhood. There are still higher uses that belong to the innocence of regenerate maturity.

Before, however, we proceed to consider the sucking child that plays on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child that puts his hand on the cockatrice' den, there is another part of the prediction that demands our attention. This is the middle portion of the series of images presented before us in the text,

and one that describes a previous and preparatory stage of the spiritual progress of the mind.

In the intervening part it is said that "the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." In the first part of the prediction we had young animals, here we have grown up ones; before, we had chiefly animals of the flock, now we have those of the herd. Animals of the flock are symbols of internal affections, those of the herd of external affections, or affections of the natural mind. The grown up animals of the herd are the natural affections of adult age. But the particular point in this part of the prophecy that requires our attention, because descriptive of a use that belongs to this stage of the mind's progression, is these animals "feeding" together. Feeding is emblematical of instruction; for the mind is nourished by knowledge as the body is by food. Straw, which the lion eats like the ox, being the lowest kind of food for animals, is the symbol of the lowest kind of religious knowledge. The knowledge which is here meant, is that which consists in a "scientific" apprehension of the truths of the Word in its literal sense. Of this sense, the bear, wherever mentioned in Scripture, is invariably the type. But the bear is considered as hostile to the cow, with which it feeds, as the lion is to the ox. In relation to the human mind, this no doubt indicates that, in acquiring knowledge, the hereditary loves as well as the acquired affections of the mind are active. There is something of self-glory as well as utility in these

mental acquisitions. But with those who go on in the regeneration, their mere natural loves are removed, and the spiritual remain. But with respect to the knowledge itself, we must not suppose that because it is from the letter of the Word, it is therefore superficial or feeble. In the literal sense of the Word divine truth is in its power, as well as in its fullness and holiness. And a knowledge of the Word in its literal sense, when connected with its proper affection, or a life according to it, unites in itself the strength of the lion and the bear with the gentleness of the cow and the ox. It contains, at the same time, within it, the innocence of the good natural affections that keep the opposite lusts in subjection—the “young ones” of the cow and the bear that lie down together. It is this kind of acquisition that prepares the mind, by giving it the proper kind of ability, for depriving of their destructive power the most deadly evils and subtle falsities of our sensual nature. These evils, with their falsities, are the asp and the cockatrice, whose particular meaning we now come to consider.

The asp and the cockatrice are only different species of serpents; and all serpents are emblems of our sensual nature, and specifically of our sensual wisdom—that wisdom whose keen perception is limited to the region of the senses, and, in the evil, believes only what it sees and feels. To be able to overcome this wisdom in ourselves, and to be able to protect ourselves against it in others, it is necessary, not merely to have innocence and simplicity, as its moral opposites,

but to have the innocence of wisdom, which is at once its moral and intellectual opposite. When the Lord sent forth his disciples into the world to preach the Gospel, he counselled them to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves; and the reason he gave for this union of wisdom with simplicity was, that he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. The disciples were to protect themselves against wicked men, and to do them good, by the exercise of a prudence on a level with their own, which would be employed against them. Innocence has power, not by itself alone, but in union with, and by means of, wisdom. Innocence without wisdom is no match for wisdom without innocence. Many an unsuspecting daughter of Eve has been seduced from the paths of innocence by the subtlety of the serpent. If wisdom of this kind is necessary for protection against the subtlety of the serpent in the world without us, not less necessary is it to protect us from the subtlety of the serpent in our own bosoms. The indwelling viper of our own corrupt selfhood is not only the most subtle, but the most deadly of our foes. It strives, by its soft allurements and subtle reasonings, to draw our affections away from the tree of life to the tree of death, from God to ourselves, from the soul to the senses, from happiness to pleasure. All such allurements are but the charming of the serpent, and all such reasonings but the cruel venom of asps. Their bite produces spiritual torpor, which ends in eternal death.

But there is a power that renders even these worst

of our enemies harmless. The innocence of wisdom can so subdue the will and wisdom of our sensual nature as to deprive them of the power to do us harm. The more we have of this innocence, or the purer it is, the greater is our power over our sensual nature. The same peculiarity of the imagery in this part of the prophecy, as in that relating to the lamb and the kid, teaches the same truth. The younger the child, the greater its power, and the more complete its immunity from danger. The sucking child plays on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child puts its hand on the cockatrice' den. Our strength is in our weakness. The less we have of self, the more we have of God. The less we rely on our own will and wisdom, the more God's will and wisdom become our support. The more we become little children, the nearer we are to the kingdom of heaven; and the more we have of that kingdom within us, the more we enjoy of its protection and blessing.

Yet we ought ever to remember that, to whatever states of purity and peace we may attain, we owe them to the Lord alone. And so entirely are they his in us, that the ground of our selfhood for ever remains in itself unchanged, and would successfully assert its dominion were the Lord's presence and power for a moment removed. However much our evils may be subdued, their nature is never changed. The wolf may dwell with the lamb, and the leopard may lie down with the kid; but they are the wolf and the leopard still. And the sucking child may play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child may put its hand on the

cockatrice' den; but they are the asp and the cockatrice still. We owe our safety, not to our evils changing their nature, or being entirely destroyed, but to the power which the good we receive from God gives us over them. There are some things, it is true, that are neutral in their character, and only become good or evil in the using; and there are some affections and acts that are only good or evil according to the end that actuates them; but that which in itself is evil never changes its nature and becomes good. And yet, such is the goodness and the power of God, that the evils of our nature may be so far subdued as to become harmless as the wolf and the cockatrice of this charming type of regenerate perfection and peacefulness.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who has published these good tidings of peace,—of inward, spiritual, and heavenly peace,—and who has himself given, in his holy life, the most perfect exemplification of the moral beauty of our text. For though he assumed our common nature, with all its hereditary infirmities, yet so peacefully in his bosom did the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the sucking child play on the hole of the asp, that no sign of the ferocity of the one or the cunning of the other ever appeared. In him all these hereditary evils were completely cast out; in us they can never be more than subdued. Let us humbly and reverentially follow him in the regeneration, and he will lead us into his holy mountain, by confirming us in a state of holy love, enabling us finally to stand on the holy mountain of the heavenly Zion, where nothing shall ever hurt or destroy.



## SERMON III.

### PRACTICE THE FOUNDATION OF PRINCIPLE.

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

PSALM xi. 3.

EVERYTHING that exists and subsists must have a foundation to rest upon. This is a law to which there are no exceptions. Creation and revelation are alike subject to it. Nothing is complete, actual, and permanent till it comes into its ultimate form or condition, beyond which it cannot go. There only is a thing completed, bounded, fixed; there only has it reaction, reciprocation, power; there only has it usefulness, increase, reproduction; and there only can it begin to reascend to its first cause, and, by connecting the end with the beginning, complete the circle of dependent existence. But for this law the material universe would never have been created, nor, of course, would man ever have existed as a material being. The material universe was created for no other end than to people heaven with immortal and happy beings. But God ever takes the simplest and most direct means to

accomplish his ends. If, therefore, he could have created beings immortal and happy at once, it would have been inconsistent with all his known economy to have employed for effecting this purpose the complex and indirect machinery of the mundane system, and imprisoned spiritual and immortal souls in material and perishable bodies. To have done so would have been an unnecessary waste of means, even supposing the purpose of creation could have been completely answered by it. But what shall we say to God's creating the world and planting man upon it, supposing the Divine purpose could have been effected without it, when the less direct means has proved the more uncertain; for ours is a world of sin and suffering, and many souls that begin their existence here never enter the heaven for which they were created. But the truth is, the existence of souls and of soul-worlds without a material basis is a thing impossible, because inconsistent with the laws of creation and of finite existence. Creation, as an outbirth from God, never stops midway between first and last, but proceeds to its farthest limit, where the activity of created substance ends in inertia, or subsides into a state of rest, and where creation acquires the power of reaction, and thence of ascending and returning to God its Creator. All theories that people heaven, or any intermediate region between heaven and earth, with original races of conscious, rational, and immortal beings, are but the day-dreams of a distempered fancy, that acts in ignorance or in defiance of a fundamental law of creation. When God created the earth he created it not in vain, which

he would have done, if his purpose could have been answered as well, or better, without it. He formed it to be inhabited, and as the indispensable means of providing inhabitants for the kingdom of heaven. When, therefore, God would "build his stories in the heavens," he laid their foundations in the earth, and when he would give existence to angels, he created men. And he did so, because in no other way could he accomplish his beneficent object; for, though flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, yet every finite being must lay the foundation of his immortality in mortality, and of his celestial happiness in terrestrial virtue. Nay, so necessary is it for spiritual beings to begin their existence in the natural world, that every spirit and angel is invested with a delicate integument, woven from the purest substances of nature, and which forms the cutaneous covering of his spiritual body, without which it would be dissipated; so that this natural integument forms a particular basis to every individual spirit, as the natural universe forms a general foundation to the whole spiritual world. For these reasons there is no angel in heaven who has not been once a man on earth. The creation of angels as such, and still more the rebellion and expulsion of some from the seats of bliss, is merely a traditional version, and thence a poetical form, of the fall of man and his expulsion from paradise. He who is once in heaven can "go no more out." This is a life of probation; the other is one of fruition. In this world there is change; in the other there is only progression.

If heaven and spiritual beings could not have origi-

nally existed without natural life as a beginning, and a material world as a foundation, neither could they continue to exist if the foundations were destroyed. The destruction of the material universe would involve the ruin of the whole spiritual world. Deprived at once of its seminary and support, it would melt away, and fall into utter dissolution.

It is true that Scripture seems to predict the end of the world. Such parts of Scripture are either mistranslated or misunderstood. St. Paul is made to say,—“Now once in the *end of the world* hath Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;” and, “All these things happened unto them for examples, and are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.” “The end of the world” should be, as it here evidently means, the end of the age or religious dispensation. The passing away of heaven and earth, of which prophecy speaks, is but a figure, in the prophetic style, for the end of the church. The plain truth is, that “one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever.” Heaven is God’s throne, and the earth is his footstool. If the footstool were removed, the throne itself would give way.

What we have said respecting heaven and earth is more directly true of the church in heaven and the church on earth. The idea of the one is included in that of the other. The creation of our earth, unless with a view to the existence upon it of the church, as the means of regenerating human beings, would have no final cause worthy of the Creator. Every earth must be

a seminary of heaven, or be in progress to become one. It is the church on earth, therefore, that is the immediate basis of the church in heaven. Our earth, for this reason, has never been left without a church or religious dispensation upon it. In her greatest perils the church has ever been saved by some divine interposition; and when her extremity was such that no lower means could avail, God himself came down upon earth to rescue and restore her.

The law of which we are now speaking is exemplified in the Word as well as in the works of God. As a divine revelation, the Word is common to both worlds—the spiritual and the natural; to the church in heaven as well as to the church on earth. It has a celestial and a spiritual sense for angels, and a natural sense for men. Indeed, revelation and creation run parallel to each other, every part of the one having a part corresponding to it of the other, from the highest to the lowest. As the natural world is the basis of the spiritual, so is the natural sense of the Word the basis of its spiritual and celestial senses. Not, however, simply as a book does the Word on earth form the foundation of the Word in heaven. As a sacred writing the Word is of priceless value, and should be preserved in its integrity, and guarded as the apple of the eye. Without this it could not be faithfully transcribed upon the human mind, which is the purpose for which it was given in its written form. But all important as the Word of God is, it is in human minds that truth has a living presence upon earth, as in the minds of angels it has a living presence in

heaven. It is not the Word as a written or printed book, but the Word as a living principle in the minds of men, that forms the basis of the living Word in heaven. How momentous is this truth! And not less so is another truth, that the Word on earth forms such a basis in the minds of men exactly in proportion as it is understood and believed, and as it is loved and lived. Were it possible entirely to pervert its meaning, or efface its truths and principles from the minds of men, the foundations of the Word in heaven would be destroyed. At one period in the history of man this consummation was almost reached. The Jews had made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions; and, as a consequence, the church amongst them stood upon the brink of ruin. When man's long downward course had reached its limit, and the foundations of the Word, of the church, and of humanity itself, were virtually destroyed, then did the Lord come into the world to lay these foundations anew. As the Word, and as man in ultimates, he became himself the "sure foundation" on which all things in heaven and earth repose as on the immovable Rock of Ages. By assuming humanity, too, in a world which is the ultimate of all others, he has provided directly for the integrity of the church in this world, and indirectly for its integrity in every other, and thus for its universal conservation.

Such was the grand result of the Lord's coming into the world. But although the general foundations can never be destroyed, individuals may destroy the foundations of heaven and happiness in themselves.

And in order to take a more particular and practical view of the subject, we will now proceed to point out, for the purposes of instruction and warning, some of the ways in which this may be effected.

We will consider religion so far as it consists of love, faith, and piety. Each of these, considered as an inward grace, must have its foundation in some corresponding outward virtue. The foundation of love is goodness, the foundation of faith is truth, and the foundation of piety is external worship. Without these outward virtues, the inward graces can neither exist actually nor be preserved from decay and death. If, without their proper foundation, they have any place in the mind, it is only as sentiments, that are as delusive as they are unreal. Such sentimental graces afford a certain kind of mental gratification; but there their use begins and ends. Seeking neither communion with God nor fellowship with men, they have neither heavenly ends nor earthly objects, and on the soul awaking in another world, they vanish as the illusions of a dream. Such persons never, indeed, have any solid foundations either for their principles or their hopes. But their case serves to show the unsubstantiality of inward feeling and sentiment, that have no ground in suitable outward actions; and this is the more necessary to be seen, as it is a course which all are secretly inclined to follow.

Every human being is a heaven and a world in the least form; his internal being an image of heaven and his external an image of the world. Religion, to have actual and permanent existence in any one,

must be present at once in its graces in the mind, and in its virtues in the outward life. The outward virtue is the foundation of the inward grace; and if these foundations are destroyed, the inward graces which rest upon them must pass away.

We will therefore briefly consider this important principle in relation to the graces of love, faith, and piety.

I. Love is the highest grace of religion, and God is its highest object. But love, even considered as a grace, is the love of God as the supreme good—the infinite impersonation of all moral excellence, of holiness, benevolence, justice, mercy. But what is this love, unless it lead to a practical manifestation in the life of that goodness in God which is its object? As a solitary grace in the mind it is a mere sentimental shade, which has no substantial existence. Whatever we really love we try to possess or realize. If we love goodness as an infinite perfection, or as the quality of an infinitely perfect Being, we will strive to realize it in ourselves as a finite perfection; and to realize it, we must not only love, but do it. Loving and doing are distinct, but they are not separable, unless where the power of doing is denied, and then the will becomes the deed, because it is in the continual effort to put itself forth in action. The Lord declared the practical character of all true love when he said,—“He that hath my commandments, and doeth them, he it is that loveth me.” True love is, indeed, the love of doing; and where love is not followed by suitable action, and does not habitually rest upon it, it is because it is more imaginary than real. If we truly love God, we love



his will; and if we love his will, we strive to do it. The love of God without obedience to his will is like the filial love of a wayward child, which is neither grateful to the parents nor beneficial to itself. God does not desire to be loved for his own sake, but for ours. He does not desire love for the sake of love, but for the sake of use, or for the sake of the good which his love prompts us to do, for the benefit and happiness of others as well as of ourselves. His economy evinces that he intended and provided, that all true happiness should arise out of doing what may contribute to the spiritual and temporal welfare of our neighbour. This is not an arbitrary appointment, but is grounded in the nature of man as an image of God. God is infinitely active as well as infinitely good, and his goodness is manifested in his actions. What are his works? Let us look at creation and providence, at redemption and salvation; and there we see infinite power, as the energy of infinite love and wisdom, exerted, not in a single original act, but in an ever sustained operation; and all this to confer upon other and created beings a measure of his own fullness, perfection, and happiness. We cannot be moral images of God without being like him in his infinite activity. We must work; and if we have true love we will shall work. Works are the foundation on which love rests. If these foundations are never laid in our outward life, there can be no mansion in the mind in which love can dwell; if, after they have been laid and built upon, they are destroyed, whether undermined by secret vice or forcibly broken down by open wickedness, love can

have no place in the mind, and the soul no place in heaven.

II. If goodness is necessary as a foundation for love, no less necessary is truth as a foundation for faith. Truth is the object of faith, as goodness is the object of love. The quality and quantity of the truths we possess determine in some measure the nature and extent of our faith. The purer the truths, the more certain the faith; the more numerous the truths, the broader the foundation on which it rests. It is true that there may be much religious knowledge in the memory, with little or no true faith in the mind; but there can be no faith without truth as its basis. Faith is the belief of truth. There can be no true belief in that which is unknown, nor even in that which is not understood. Where there is no truth there is no foundation for faith to rest upon.

But the practical foundation of faith does not consist of truth as an object of intellectual apprehension, but of truth as a practical virtue. The foundation of faith consists of truth considered as truthfulness and fidelity, and in having faith, on just and reasonable grounds, in these virtues in others. If we have the truth in this form, the truth will make us free, not only from intellectual error, but from practical falsehood, and from acting habitually on the principle that there is no faith to be placed in the faithfulness of others. The world in which we live justifies the use of circumspection; but there is no just cause for universal and constant suspicion. There is a faith in our neighbour as well as a love towards him, as there is a faith

in, as well as a love to, God. But we should also endeavour to make our neighbour worthy of our faith, by showing him an example of the worth of faith in ourselves. "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and love no false oath; for all these things do I hate, saith the Lord." Sincerity in our communications with each other, and such a judgment upon the character and conduct of our neighbour as is consistent with truth and tends to promote true peace, these are among the materials of which a real foundation for faith is formed. If we are unfaithful to men, we cannot have true faith in God.

But faith in God must find its foundation also in practice in relation to God himself. Faith in God includes reliance on him for whatever we require for our spiritual and temporal life, and a consequent submission to his will when he sees good to withhold or take away the things which seem to us necessary or desirable for them. We believe that there is a God, that he exercises a providential care over us for our good, and that everything works together for good to those that love him. So far we do well. But if we rely on our own prudence for the attainment of the blessings of spiritual and natural life, and despond or murmur if we do not obtain what we desire, we, so far, have no practical faith, or no foundation on which our faith can rest. Mental faith must therefore have a practical form, to be true faith. Without this as a foundation, faith can only exist as an unsubstantial idea in the understanding, which must vanish away.

III. We come now to speak of external worship as the foundation of the grace of piety or the devotional feeling. Piety is that grace which leads us to venerate the Divine Being as the author of our existence, and the bountiful giver of all good, to supplicate him for his mercies, and to return to him the blessings he bestows upon us, in devout acknowledgment. Outward worship is not less necessary for the existence of true piety than good works are for the existence of true love, or of fidelity for true faith. It is perhaps more difficult to see that it is so. Good works are seen to be of positive use to our fellow-creatures, who are benefited by our services; but as God is too good to be moved by our prayers, and too great to be exalted by our praise, the uses of worship are not so obvious. We now speak of worship as the foundation of piety. And if we wish to strengthen and exalt our devotional feelings, we must bring them out into acts of private and social worship. If our devotional feelings are sincere and ardent, they will come spontaneously into suitable action. But, as in most other religious acts, we often find it necessary, to the due performance of worship, to bring a sense of duty to the aid of devotional feeling. Our general state being such as to require this, God has enjoined worship upon us as a duty. To render this duty still more binding and effective, he has instituted the Sabbath as a day for solemn and united worship. And to give worship, in its most solemn and important acts, even a material basis, he has ordained the perpetual observance of the two sacraments of baptism and the holy supper. All these

acts being commanded as duties, it must be important to perform and observe them. Their use must be most important. They cannot change the mind of God; but they cannot fail, when we worship in spirit and truth, to bring us more immediately into the Divine presence, and prepare us to receive a greater measure of the spirit of his love and truth. They bring us, at the same time, into more intimate communion with the faithful on earth and the blest in heaven. They serve, further, to give the inward principle stability and power; to give it a basis on which it may rest, and from which it may ascend nearer and nearer to the Divine Object of all true piety. If the true foundations are once laid, we must be careful to preserve them. If they are shaken, our piety will become insecure; if they are destroyed, it will die away.

To conclude, how clearly may we see, and how greatly admire, the universality of the law, that all things repose on solid foundations. In regard to ourselves this law is of great practical importance. If outward duties are necessary for the support of inward principles, what religion can there be where they are greatly or entirely neglected? "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" If the outward duties and exercises of religion are removed, the principles of inward righteousness can have no support, and can have no real existence. Justice and judgment are the habitation of the throne of God in the human heart; if these are removed, the divine government of love and wisdom in the soul must cease, and with it all true peace here and happiness hereafter.

If we would cultivate and form the real Christian state, be it our constant endeavour to cultivate the Christian character. It is, indeed, peculiarly our part of the work of religion to lay its foundations in humility, self-denial, and good works. If we sincerely and faithfully do our duty in regard to the external requirements of religion, the Lord will build us up in the heavenly life. Let it be our chief care to do as the Lord has commanded us, and he will provide every good thing.

## SERMON IV.

## ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”—LUKE xiii. 23-27.

WE know not what object this man had in view in asking the present question. The Pharisees held that salvation was attainable only by a few. He may have been one of that sect, who tried to extort from Jesus an unpopular statement on an article of popular belief; or he may have been an honest inquirer, who desired the solution of a theological difficulty; or he may have been one who was prompted by religious curiosity to seek information on a point left undetermined by the law and the prophets. Whatever may have been his aim, many since his time have sought in the

written Word the same information which he desired to obtain from the Word incarnate. Little profiting by the indirect reproof which the Lord administered to this inquirer, many since his time have prosecuted their inquiries on the same point, till they have wrung from the Scripture answers which, if not true, have at least been satisfactory to themselves. Different interrogators have obtained different replies, showing that, on theological questions, it is possible for men to receive from the Bible responses that are little else than the utterance of their own secret thoughts. To some benevolent minds the Word of God seems to teach universal salvation ; while to others, of less natural tenderness, or of severer justice, it appears to hold out hopes of happiness to but a small portion of the human race.

If this point is left undecided in the Old Testament, it must be acknowledged that there is some apparent ground in the New for taking up a decided opinion on the subject. The Lord's own teaching seems to countenance, if not to sanction, the view that the number lost is much greater than the number saved. It might even seem as if our Lord, on another occasion, had given the very information that he refused to communicate on this. In his Sermon on the Mount he tells his hearers that " wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat ; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And to the same effect he declared, on another occasion, that " many be called, but few chosen." If these declarations are to be understood



in their strictly literal meaning, the inquiry in our text had already received an affirmative answer, the dread reality being, that there are indeed "few that be saved."

Religious men have seen this difficulty, and have endeavoured to explain it. The Lord's words in Matthew, it has been asserted, refer to the relative numbers lost and saved, while the question in our text relates to the absolute number saved, without any reference to the number lost. This, we fear, is a distinction without a difference. Every such inquiry must include the idea of proportion. Any one who wishes to know if there are few that be saved, wishes also to know if there are many that be lost; he wishes to learn whether the number saved forms the smaller or greater portion of the whole. As this does not explain the difficulty, it may be useful to examine the Lord's declaration in his Sermon on the Mount, with a view to ascertain whether it was designed to convey the information which he withholds on the present occasion, and the very desire to obtain which he indirectly reprehends.

The Word of God contains everywhere a purely spiritual sense. This does not, indeed, necessarily invalidate the literal sense; but there are instances, and there is reason to believe that this is one, where the literal sense is accommodated to the carnal states of men, so as to act upon their fears, while it is, at the same time, framed to contain, for the instruction of the spiritual, a higher meaning—one expressing real, and not apparent truth. In looking at the Lord's declaration in Matthew, we find that He employs purely

natural images to express purely spiritual ideas. Gates and ways, wide and strait, broad and narrow, many and few, are all purely natural images, but used to express purely spiritual ideas. Numbers may, indeed, be considered an exception, since numeration may seem to be common to both worlds. Yet it is not so. The inhabitants of the spiritual world have no idea of numbers simply as such. The natural idea of magnitude and number, as natural attributes, cannot enter heaven, where there is neither time nor space. Still, supposing that angels and spirits could have an idea of numbers, many and few, in their vocabulary, must express, in addition, some purely spiritual idea, of which our natural idea of number is but the outbirth and the image. Number forming the ground of the present difficulty, we may therefore first inquire what spiritual idea is expressed by numbers in general, and by many and few in particular. In the Divine Word, spiritually understood, numbers do not express quantity but quality. Numbers are a kind of adjectives used to qualify that of which they are the predicates. Numbers do not, therefore, mean how many, but what kind. On this simple principle, many and few are intended to express, not the relative *numbers*, but the respective *characters* of the lost and saved. Many and few, although they are indefinite numbers, yet express definite qualities, and a definite distinction, as applicable to the two opposite classes to which they refer. Many is expressive of truth, and few of goodness; more strictly, many is expressive of truth separate from goodness, or of faith without charity; while few is expressive of truth

grounded in goodness, or of faith united to charity. Here, then, we have at once a solution of the difficulty. And, instead of a piece of information which could only gratify curiosity or oppress the heart with sadness, we have a momentous truth—one of the greatest possible practical importance, and which has a direct tendency to lead us to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and walk with perseverance in the narrow way. For the truth which the words of the Lord teach is no other than this: truth grounded in goodness, or faith united to charity, is that which saves; and truth without goodness, or faith separate from charity, is that which condemns. This exposition is equally applicable to the words, “Many are called, but few chosen.” It is truth that gives the call; it is good that secures the election. All who know the truth are numbered among the called, but those who do the good which truth teaches make up the number of the chosen.

The spiritual idea and distinction expressed in the words few and many are equally involved in the other contrasted terms that occur in connection with them; and which shows the harmony and unity of the whole passage. The gate that leads to life is strait, that which leads to destruction is wide; the way that leads to life is narrow, the road that leads to destruction is broad. The strait gate and the narrow way, like the few that walk therein, are expressive of truth grounded in goodness, or faith united to charity; the wide gate and the broad way, like the many that walk therein, are expressive of truth without goodness, or of faith separate from charity. Those who, by following the

teaching of spiritual truth, have commenced and are pursuing a life in agreement with spiritual truth, which looks and leads to goodness, are those who have found the strait gate, and are walking in the narrow way which leads to life; but those who, knowing the truth, yet live not in the good which it teaches, but in the evil which it condemns, are those who have entered in at the wide gate, and are walking in the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

But it may be a matter of surprise that truth and faith should be the wide gate and the broad way that lead to destruction. It is the teaching of the Scriptures, "He that heareth my words, and *doeth them not*, I will liken him unto a foolish man that 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." "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." "Though I had all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and had not charity, I am nothing." To hear the words of eternal truth, and yet leave undone the duties and charities of a holy life; to have the light, and yet love and walk in the darkness; to have faith, but to be without love, is to walk with our eyes open in the broad road that leads to destruction. Truth is, in fact, a power either for good or evil, for life or death. It frees the soul from the fetters of sin, or it fastens them more firmly upon it. When its judgments are received and its teachings

followed, truth brings the soul out of bondage into freedom; but when its judgments are contemned and its teachings neglected, it casts the soul down into the blackness of darkness and into the depth of perdition. This is the condemnation, and the only condemnation, that we know and do not. Ignorance does not condemn, error does not condemn, nay, evil itself does not condemn. Ignorance may be innocent, error may be unintentional, evil may be involuntary. It is knowledge that lays us open to condemnation. Under such circumstances it may seem that ignorance is bliss. Far from it. Without the law we should not have known sin; but neither without it should we have known righteousness. Ignorance saves from condemnation, but it excludes us from justification. It is knowledge that enables us to distinguish between good and evil, and makes it possible for us to choose between them. Without the knowledge of this distinction, there would be neither vice nor virtue, sin nor righteousness, and consequently neither happiness nor misery, and neither heaven nor hell. By the law is the knowledge of sin. "I had not known sin unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." When knowledge has raised us out of ignorance, or when truth has removed our darkness, corrected our errors, and shown evil to be sin, we have a power which we did not before possess, but which may be used wisely or unwisely, for good or evil. Knowing our Lord's will, if we obey it not, we bring upon ourselves the stripes of a just but terrible retribution.

It is the remark of Swedenborg, that "truth con-

demns all to hell, good raises all to heaven." How startling the declaration ! But how great and solemn the truth ! Truth tells us that we are by nature fallen and corrupt ; it convicts and even convinces us of sin ; it shows us the way of escape. But if, with all this, we remain in a state of nature, continue in our sins, and neglect the path of life, we must receive the greater condemnation. Nominal religion is therefore emphatically the broad road that leads to destruction, and nominal Christians are emphatically the many who walk therein. It is such that our text evidently has in view, as being those who have known, but have never striven to enter the strait gate. Those who find themselves without when once the Master has risen up, are those who have known the Lord, and have been his professed followers. Such only are able to say, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." They may have eaten and drunk even of the bread and wine at the Lord's table ; but we know that it is possible, in doing this, to eat and drink damnation to ourselves. They may have listened to his teaching ; but it has been in their own streets,—receiving his heavenly wisdom in their own natural understandings, and moulding it after their self-derived intelligence. In fact, with all their profession of being his disciples, they have neglected to act upon his practical lesson, to strive to enter in at the strait gate. Let us therefore turn our attention to this important duty, that we may not have to knock in vain when the Master of the house is once risen up.

The word which the Lord here employs to express

the efforts of the earnest soul to enter into the strait gate is an agonistic term, having reference to the wrestlers who contended in the Grecian games. The disciple is considered as one who engages in a contest, in which his utmost exertions are required to insure success. In the New Testament there are frequent allusions to these contests, and the nature of the efforts necessary to obtain the crown of life is described by imagery drawn from these animated scenes.

The nature of the Christian conflict is first pointed out by contrast: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." These are the powerful spiritual antagonists with whom we have to contend, and which must be overcome in our striving to enter the gate of life. In wrestling in the circus men contended against one another; the Christian's conflict is with himself. Those against whom he strives are the evils of his own heart, and the errors of his own understanding. Selfishness and pride, doubt and unbelief, are the powers against whom he has to contend. Such a contest must be often, if not always, severe and protracted. Those who wrestled against flesh and blood were prepared for it by long and careful training; and not less must those who have to contend with the subtler and more powerful adversaries of their own minds, prepare themselves by study and prayer, by watchfulness and self-denial. And after all the preparation that can be made, there must be the actual conflict with evil and falsity, whenever they present

themselves in the path of principle or duty. In the apostolic writings much is said as to the means necessary for successful striving in the Christian life, to one or two of which we may profitably turn our attention.

As runners in the Christian race we must divest ourselves of whatever would retard our progress; we must "lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the glory that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God." Among those things that tend to weigh us down and hinder our progress, are the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. The cares that encumber us are those that would usurp the place of higher cares, making the world the object of an affection and pursuit that should be devoted to heaven. But the sin that doth so easily beset us is a still greater impediment to Christian advancement. That which constitutes the ruling love of our hearts, or the prevailing habit of our lives, is the chief hinderance to us in our spiritual progress; for it has become so much a part of our nature as to be spontaneous, and so passes, in many instances, into action unobserved. How necessary and profitable is it, in resisting these, to look to the Lord Jesus, who inherited all the tendencies of our frail nature, and who was tempted in all things as we are, and strove as we have to strive; but who overcame, and not only entered, but opened for us, the gate of life, and sat down upon the throne of universal, spiritual dominion, to the blessings of which he will raise every one who over-



comes! Not only by his example are we encouraged, but by his strength alone are we enabled to do this great work. He is the author and finisher of our faith. We must look to him; for by that new power which he has acquired over heaven and hell and the souls of men, through his work in the flesh, we may now become more than conquerors.

Besides eschewing evil, we must be temperate in the use of secondary good. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." The apostle who insists upon this cites his own practice. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." Temperance, that happy mean between abstinence and excess, whether in the use of things relating to the body or the mind, is a most important virtue, but one of the most difficult to acquire. It preserves both mind and body in the condition that best fits them for useful action. The cultivation of this virtue is itself a profitable discipline; for the exercise gives steadfastness of purpose and steadiness of action, and gives us a power of self-control, which is most valuable as a preparation for the strife into which we must needs occasionally enter for still higher objects. That mental temperance which is the result of zeal tempered by discretion, of warm feeling regulated by cool judgment, is still more necessary to success in striving after the attainment of a true life than moderation in the gratification of the senses.

One other virtue may be noticed, which was not more a means of true success than a condition of reward. "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he

not crowned, except he strive lawfully." In the race no one obtained the prize, even if he were first at the goal, if he had evaded the law, to shorten his course. And what is the law by which our Christian race is regulated? The law which prescribes our course of life, the faithful pursuit of which secures the crown of everlasting glory, is the law of the divine commandments. The commandments form the laws of eternal and immutable order by which our conduct must be regulated in our striving to enter the strait gate and to walk in the narrow way; and the neglect or violation of the laws cannot but prevent us from securing the reward of obedience and fidelity. "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." The commandments are the laws of life, for love is life, and the whole law and the prophets hang upon the two laws of love to God and love to man.

Our religious life in the world consists of two parts—ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well; the first is reformation, the second is regeneration. Reformation, which is effected by striving against evil, brings us to, and introduces us within, the strait gate; and regeneration then leads us onward in the narrow way, and finally admits us through the door into heaven itself, as our Father's house and our eternal home.

While this reflection should encourage us, there is one that addresses itself to us as a solemn warning. We find that those who, in this world, never "strive" to enter the strait gate, find the door shut against them in the other life, and cannot obtain admission though they "seek" to enter. To "strive" and to "seek"

are two very different things. The foolish seek for happiness in the other world, the wise strive after virtue in this. Virtue is the choice of the wise: the foolish, as well as the wise, desire happiness; and they seek it in heaven, not knowing that heaven to them would be more a hell than the abodes of the damned. But when once the master of the house has risen up, the door of repentance and of heaven is shut for ever. Oh, solemn thought! And the more solemn that the door which is thus shut is the door of our own souls, the door at which the Lord stands and knocks so long as probationary life continues, but which evil closes, and which death seals beyond the power even of Omnipotence ever again to open. That the Lord shuts the soul out of heaven is an apparent truth. The real truth is that confirmed evil closes up the interiors of the mind, through which the love, and light, and blessedness of heaven enter, and leaves the soul in everlasting darkness and misery. O my soul, strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk faithfully in the narrow way!

## SERMON V.

## ISRAEL FIGHTING WITH AMALEK.

“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, 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. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 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. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”—  
 EXODUS xvii. 8-13.

WE never read the history of the Israelitish people aright, so as to realize the purpose for which it was written, until we perceive in it the symbolic basis of a great system of spiritual truth, of which the regeneration of the human soul is the theme and its everlasting happiness the object.

The whole experience of Israel in the desert is the typical exhibition of this one great truth,—That between the carnal life which we inherit by birth, and the

spiritual life which we acquire by regeneration, there is an intervening state of privation, conflict, and labour. The Christian disciple must lay down the carnal life before he can take up the spiritual. The life that is to be laid down has its roots deeply inserted in the loves of self and the world, and that which is to be acquired in its stead must grow out of love to God and the neighbour. The one life cannot give place to the other without severe and long-continued self-denial. This state is the wilderness that lies between our Egypt and our Canaan; and the experience of Israel in the desert is a faithful image of our own, while we are passing from the mere theoretical knowledge of religion to a state of practical wisdom.

Hunger and thirst were the first of Israel's trials in the desert; and so intense were their sufferings, that they broke out in murmuring against God. Divine power could have anticipated their wants; but this would have deprived them of a practical lesson, and us of much spiritual instruction. The first hunger and thirst of the people in the desert were for the meat and drink of Egypt, which they could no longer obtain; and they had not yet come to hunger and thirst after, and therefore could not yet receive, manna from heaven and water from the rock of Horeb. Such is also the nature of the soul's desires, which form the ground of the earlier trials of the Christian life. There is a time when the Christian pilgrim can no longer enjoy the delights of sin, but has not yet learnt sufficiently to enter into the delights of righteousness. This is the

soul's hunger and thirst in the desert. Outwardly it is the yet unquenched desire for the meat which perisheth, and for the drink after which the soul thirsts again; but inwardly it is the latent desire for the true bread which comes down from heaven, and for the water that flows from the spiritual rock which is Christ; after being satisfied with which the soul shall never hunger nor thirst any more for the gratifications of mere sensual life. Such a trial has a double use: it starves out the lingering desire and relish for sensual things, and develops and strengthens the yet feeble desire and relish for spiritual things. It is the soul's weaning, as preparatory to its being fed with strong meat. It enables the Christian to say, "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." Such weaning of the soul from merely natural delights gives it to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to receive the promised blessing that it shall be filled. It was after the congregation had suffered the severe trials of hunger and thirst, and while they were yet faint and weary, that Amalek came and fought with them in Rephidim. Before Rephidim became the scene of that terrible conflict, it had been a place of encampment for the children of Israel, as one of the divinely appointed stages of their journey through the desert. Deeply interesting to the Christian are these resting-places. They are the symbols of his states of repose and refreshment, without which he would soon sink under the fatigues of the journey, and the weight of the trials of life. Like Israel in the

desert, the Christian has his alternate states of labour and repose; and they are among the means by which he is perfected. The states in which the Christian pilgrim rests from the labours and the trials of life, to refresh and recruit his mind by reading, contemplation, self-examination, and prayer, are his oases in the desert, where he finds at least some of the green pastures and the still waters by which his soul is restored again, after being "wearièd with his journey." Such a state provides him with goods and truths that prove "supports" to his soul in his travel, as the name Rephidim is understood to imply. But, considered as "encampments," there is another and peculiar use in these halting-places. The encampments of the children of Israel, in which the tribes were afterwards arranged in a particular order, with Judah, as the leading tribe of one division, on the east, Reuben on the south, Ephraim on the west, Dan on the north, and Levi around the ark, in the centre, presented a type of the arrangement of all the principles of goodness and truth in heavenly order in the mind, which makes it a little heaven, and an image of the greater. Such an arrangement into heavenly order of the principles of religion in the mind is necessary to prepare the Christian for entering into the combat of temptation; for "order is power." The Rephidim of the Christian is therefore, as a camp, a state of preparation for enduring temptation, and as a battle-field, a state of temptation itself, in which heavenly truth is the prize contended for. If the circumstances of this conflict have their exact correspondence in Christian experience, the

temptation which it represented must have some features peculiar to itself, as indicated by the singular means by which Israel conquered.

The twelve tribes of Israel representing all the principles of goodness and truth, or love and faith, that form the kingdom of God in the human mind, their enemies represented all evil and false principles that constitute the kingdom of darkness, which rules in the mind before regeneration. Between these there is always opposition, and often conflict; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Of all the enemies of Israel, the Amalekites seem to have been the most deadly, and the most treacherous, if not the most cruel. Their character is afterwards described by Moses (Deut. xxv. 17, 18), "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." For this conduct the Lord declared, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." Several generations after this, Saul was sent to execute upon Amalek this sentence of extermination, and it was because he saved the king and the best of the flock that he was rejected from being king of Israel. The principles represented by such a people must be of a deeply malignant and most pernicious character, essentially and eternally opposed to the government of the Lord's love and truth in the soul; for the Lord was to have war with Amalek from generation to generation. The Amalekites represented



false principles grounded in interior evil. The nature of these principles, and the mode in which they act, may be best learnt from the leading characteristics of the people who typified them. The Amalekites were not enemies that met the Israelites in front, and encountered their strong ones who led the van; but they assailed them behind, and smote the feeble ones who lingered in the rear. So the Amalekitish principles are not the false suggestions that meet us openly in our intellectual inquiries and reflections; but they are such as secretly insinuate themselves into our thoughts when subjects of deep life-interest engage our attention. They do not, in fact, come from without, and meet us in front, where the intellect resides, and encounter our strong reasons; but they come upon us from within, and assail us behind, where the will has its seat, and smite us through our feeble moral principles and weak resolutions. As every one of us is evil by nature, and more or less so by practice, principles of this character lurk in every human bosom. This being the case, some of the severest of our conflicts with ourselves must arise from resisting them. Such a conflict was represented by that which took place in Rephidim between Israel and Amalek. Having its antitype in the experience of the Christian life, it is important, before we proceed to consider the particulars of the present narrative, to have some general view of the meaning of the conflict which it records.

The spiritual truths shadowed forth in the historical events of the Old Testament are, in many instances, plainly expressed in the teachings of the New; and of

this the present affords an example. The apostle Paul, speaking of the conflict in the Christian's mind between what is of God and what is of self, expresses himself in these words,—“I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” This description of the state and experience of the Christian in the inward conflict of opposing principles, could not have found a more perfect outward representation than in the scene before us. Moses, the recipient and representative of the divine law, stationed on the top of the hill in security and peace, represents the law of God in the inward man; while Amalek, fighting with Israel in the plain below, represents the law of sin in the members warring against the law of the mind. What Scripture teaches on this point experience too abundantly testifies. How often do we feel our natural inclinations rebelling against our sense of religious duty—our self-love conflicting with love to God—our love of the world with love to the neighbour! How frequently do we find unbelief contending with faith in God, and distrust with reliance on his providence! All such oppositions are parts of the warfare of the Christian life—of the inward conflicts that from time to time arise between the lusts of the old man and the affections of the new. This warfare is essentially within. Out of the heart proceed the lusts or evil loves, which, in passing through the understanding, arm themselves with false reasonings, and which are ever ready to assail the

armies of the spiritual Israel, consisting of the good affections armed with the truths of faith. Among these hostile principles are the falsities of interior evil, or evil thoughts that spring from corrupt affections, that steal upon us unawares, and seek to subdue us through our weaknesses. Deeply interesting and most important must it be to know how such assaults are to be met, how such enemies are to be overcome.

Moses commanded Joshua to choose out men, and go and fight with Amalek. Joshua was the type of divine truth in the outward man, subordinate and subservient to divine truth in the inward man. The inner man is suited for reflection, the outer man for action; the one directs, the other executes; the truth which, in the spiritual mind, is meek and calm, in descending into the outer man is full of energy and zeal. Yet judgment as well as zeal is required for the execution of any great work. When falsities, which have stolen in upon the mind, are to be resisted, we have to "choose out" truths suitable to oppose them; just as in discussing one has to select such arguments as he thinks best adapted to meet the objections of his adversary. In states of trial and conflict, the Christian must look to the divine Word for direction, and there he will find truths suited to the various states and circumstances of his religious life. In the Word there are truths that comfort us in affliction, that guide us in action, that nerve us in the hour of danger, that uphold us in times of conflict. There are therefore truths that are adapted to meet the different false and evil principles that assail us in temptation. The more extensive and

discriminating our knowledge of the truths of the Word, in respect to their opposites, the better provided are we with the means of defence against them. The more we are able to "choose out" the truths that are directly opposed to any false suggestions that arise in our minds, the better prepared are we to resist and overcome them.

But Moses did not leave this great issue to the zeal and judgment of Joshua alone. He himself was to take a part, but one consistent with his character, in the great action. When he commanded Joshua to choose out men, and go and fight with Amalek, he said, "To-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand." As in important worldly affairs, so in spiritual, there must be a time of preparation as well as of action. Spiritual preparation is made, not only by the selection of means, but by a change of state. The state of mind in and from which we fight the good fight of faith, is a still more necessary condition of success than the means of which we make choice. What time is in the affairs of the natural life, state is in the affairs of the spiritual life. What a new day is to the one, a new state is to the other. The morrow appointed by Moses for fighting with Amalek, is the new state into which the Christian has to enter, in order to oppose the principles which their enemies represented. No evil or false principle can be overcome but by the good or truth which is its opposite. Falsity grounded on interior evil can only be successfully opposed when the Christian fights from truth grounded in interior goodness. That Amalek may be conquered,

Moses must stand on the top of the hill; for there he is the symbol of truth grounded in interior goodness, or of faith grounded in charity. And he must stand with the rod of God in his hand; for that rod was the symbol of divine truth in its power, proceeding from the activity of truth in the inmost of the mind.

On the morrow, accordingly, when Joshua went out to fight with Amalek, Moses ascended the hill, and there stretched out towards Israel the rod that had wrought such wonders in Egypt; that had divided the Red Sea, and had brought the gushing stream from the rock of Horeb. And now commenced those singular phenomena that hold so prominent a part in this sacred narrative. "When Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." The hands of Moses continue alternately to rise and fall with his returning or failing strength; and as often as they rise and fall the battle sways from side to side. At last a crisis comes. Moses' hands are heavy; he can no longer raise them up, or he raises them so feebly and for so brief a space, that Israel, moved sympathetically with the prophet's arms, becomes enfeebled too. And now Amalek gains upon Israel, and threatens to consume him with the devouring sword. What is to be done to avert the catastrophe? Aaron and Hur, who have stood beside Moses, passive but deeply interested spectators of the scene before them, see the peril in which Israel is placed, and hasten to turn the tide of the battle in favour of their people, by co-operating with the means which God has appointed for success. To support the now exhausted

prophet, they take a stone and set him thereon; while they hold up his hands, one on the one side and the other on the other side, and keep them steady till the going down of the sun. And now the tide of victory turns, and flows on irresistibly in favour of Israel; and Joshua discomfits Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Such are the particulars of this singular conflict, which has no parallel in sacred history. Who that has any belief in the real divinity of the Scriptures can for a moment doubt that these acts, and their results, are spiritually significant and practically instructive? How else could they have taken place? If the rod of Moses had a miraculous power, why was the arm that sustained it left without miraculous support? If the continued elevation of Moses' hands could secure continued success and final victory to Israel, why did not Aaron and Hur sooner interpose? Because all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition. The cause of Israel's alternate failure and success, and of their ultimate triumph, contains a truth of the very highest importance to the Christian, as revealing to him the ground of his own vicissitudes in the progress of the regenerate life, and of his ultimate triumph in temptation. It teaches him, that in the conflict which takes place in his mind between hostile principles, the tendency of the struggle is influenced, and its final result is determined, principally by the state and operations of the internal man, and only secondarily by the preparation and zeal of the external. When, in the hour of conflict, the powers of the inward

man, like the hands of Moses, are raised in faith to heaven, truth prevails over falsity and good over evil; when, through feebleness of faith, they are inclined downwards to self and the world, falsity prevails over truth and evil over good. Who has not found this in his own experience? In states of tribulation, almost all are conscious of some inward principle exerting an influence over their natural thoughts and feelings. That principle is the Lord's truth in the inward man, which exerts its influence over the thoughts and feelings through truths in the outward man, where all evil resides and all conflict takes place. All are conscious, too, of the alternations of state so strikingly represented by the raising and falling of the prophet's hands. In the trials of life our faith sometimes wavers, and we feel its results in weak hands and feeble knees. On such occasions it is not our faith in the general truths of religion that wavers, but our faith in the perfect goodness and wisdom of the Lord in his dealings with us, in the particular circumstances that form the ground of the temptation. This is the kind of faith in which the Christian is tried. It is practical faith, not merely speculative; it is the faith of the heart, not only of the intellect. Indeed, all spiritual trial that deserves the name of a temptation, has for its end the transfer of our religious principles from the understanding to the heart, and the change of faith into confidence, which is the fruit of victory. Intellectual conflicts are indeed determined by a similar law. The affirmation and negation of truth, although they may seem to be determined by outward evidence, are nevertheless essen-

tially the result of an inward principle. Those who form any positive system of belief for themselves, pass through a state of doubt before they settle down into a state of conviction. There is a state of doubt that precedes belief, and there is a state of doubt that precedes denial. What is it that gives opposite results from the same outward means of judging? It is the inward ruling principle of the mind. So far as this principle is good, doubt inclines to belief; so far as it is evil, it inclines to denial. In those minds where doubt ends in belief, the state of doubt is a state of conflict; and the fluctuations of the mind between the false and the true are essentially the result of alternations of state in the interiors of the mind, where the inward law is alternately weak through the flesh and strong through the spirit. These doubts, in which truth and error alternately prevail, are incident to an initiatory stage of the spiritual life. They are a consequence and sign of the law having a place in the inward man; for no spiritual conflict could take place without it; but they are also a result and a sign of the law having as yet acquired no corresponding place in the outward man. It is the want of correspondence and harmony between the internal and external, or between the religion of the mind and the religion of the life, that is the cause of the alternate strength and feebleness of our faith; or rather it is the cause of our hands becoming heavy, and of our natural principles prevailing over the spiritual. For so far as divine truth is the law of the mind only, and not correspondently the law of the life, so far it is feeble, fluctuating in its operations, and liable to fail,



especially in the hour of trial. That the powers of the spiritual mind may be maintained steadily in their heavenward direction, and exercise a sustained influence on the natural mind below, divine truth, which is the law of the inward man, must become also, and equally, the law of the outward man. The law, as an outward rule of duty, is the stone which Aaron and Hur placed under Moses to support him when his strength had failed. Is there any difficulty in recognizing in this stone a symbol of the outward law? The law itself, as afterwards promulgated from Mount Sinai, was engraven by the finger of God on tables of stone. Moses seated on the stone, like the divine words engraven on the tables, represented the law of inward principles resting on the law of outward duties. Inward principles have no other real and stable foundation. Practice is the support of principle. Until the law, as an inward principle, acquires a solid resting-place in the practical duties of the outward life, it must be feeble and fluctuating; when it is firmly "placed thereon," it is capable of being upheld in its integrity, and of exercising a steady influence on the truths of the natural mind below, giving them power to overcome.

There are, however, other and intermediate powers through which this condition of the mind is produced, and by whose agency this result is obtained. Aaron and Hur, when they had put the stone under Moses, held up his hands, and kept them steady till Joshua had succeeded in defeating his enemies. Aaron, the eloquent brother of Moses, who was slow of speech, repre-

sented doctrine, in which inward truth finds utterance, or takes an apprehensible form. Aaron, and Hur his companion, typify the doctrine of good and truth, or, what amounts to the same, the will and understanding of the rational mind, where good and truth in their doctrinal form reside. Moses, therefore, seated on the stone, with Aaron and Hur supporting his hands, presents a type of the divine law in the inward part resting on outward obedience, and supported by the applied powers of the will and understanding. When the powers of the regenerating man thus conspire to uphold the divine law, it becomes a steady principle of faith and duty, and enables him, in his spiritual warfare, to go on conquering. The divine influx finds in the truth which is in the spiritual mind a channel through which it can descend continuously into the truths of the natural mind, and give them the power of continual victory over falsity and evil. Nor does this power cease to operate till the state of conflict is brought to a complete end; the hands of Moses are steady till the going down of the sun, and Amalek and his people are smitten with the edge of the sword. The going down of the sun is deeply impressive as well as beautifully significant. It implies not only a state completed, but a state confirmed. In the rising of the sun in the east, its progression through the south, and its setting in the west, we have a symbol of the course of every heavenly principle that adds a state to the eternal life of the soul, as a day does to the temporal life of the body. Every principle that enters permanently into the soul's life rises in the heart, passes through

the understanding, and sets in the life. Then is it a principle indeed, because it has completed its course, and it leaves its impression stamped for ever on the soul. Of every such state it may be said, "From the rising of the sun, until the going down of the same, the Lord's name shall be praised." If the state is one of spiritual conflicts, in which the soul strives for eternal life; if the evil and the good, the true and the false, have alternately prevailed, it is above all things to be desired that the sun should not go down upon the soul's defeat, but upon its victory. Defeat in such a case would be ruin,—victory secures stability.

But every particular state is an image of the general state of which it forms a part. The day of trial is an image of the day of probation. This is the day in which we must work out our salvation, and which is followed by the night in which no man can do that work. This day is one in which the labour of self-denial and conflict must be done, although this is not its only work. No one can pass through the labours and conflicts of his probationary day without a checkered experience. Outward trials there may be, inward temptations there must be. In these there will be alternations and fluctuations of state. The power of evil and good will alternately prevail, and the balance may tremble between victory and defeat. The hands that are uplifted for divine aid in the momentous struggle cannot be constantly maintained in their first direction heavenward; for the inner man is as yet unsupported by the outward agencies on whose co-operation his power of endurance depends. But if we are

faithful, the progress of the conflict will teach us wisdom, and lead us to use the means necessary for success. The progress of the regenerate life brings us into states in which we see our danger, and perceive what will enable us to avert it. These states convince us how necessary it is to unite the spirit and letter of the divine law in our experience. The Lord thus becomes to us the first and the last, and thence the Almighty, by whose power we are enabled to become more than conquerors. Let us earnestly pray and labour to have this order established within us while our day continues, that our hands may be upheld in the steadfastness of an all-confiding faith in the Lord Jesus, who, having himself been tempted in all points as we are, is able to succour us in our temptations. Then may we cherish a well-grounded hope that, ere the sun of life go down, we shall have obtained the victory over the enemies in our own hearts, and be able to pass in peace into that blessed land where all conflict shall cease.

## SERMON VI.

## A NEW YEAR'S SERMON.

SECRET THINGS BELONG TO GOD; THINGS REVEALED  
BELONG TO MAN.

“The secret things belong unto the LORD our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.”—DEUT. xxix. 29.

THE Word of God was progressively revealed, and when revealed, was capable of being gradually unfolded. While revelation was yet in progress, many things were but partially made known, which afterwards were more plainly declared or more amply described. The amount and attainable knowledge of revelation have no doubt been sufficient for the necessities of every age, that as the day of the church, so should her strength be. But while the great event of the Lord's incarnation, and the dispensation of light which it introduced, were yet future, Moses could not be seen without the veil upon his face; nor could the later prophets be perceived more clearly, since upon all the glory of revealed truth the Lord had placed a covering. This obscurity is not

confined to the Old Testament, but extends also to the New. What is revealed in the Evangelists, and more fully in the Apocalypse, respecting the future states of the church and the second coming of the Lord, has been as little understood by Christians as the predictions of Moses and the prophets were by the Jews; and it can now be clearly discerned only because the events have disclosed its true meaning. But these things, with the spiritual sense of the Word which accompanies and reveals the second advent of the Lord, are secrets of revelation itself, which time discloses and single-mindedness perceives. There are, however, secrets in the divine economy which have no place in revelation, and which, from the nature of the things themselves, or the necessity of the case, cannot be revealed. I do not allude to a supposed secret and a revealed will of God, which are contrary to each other, nor to certain supposed truths being revealed for our belief, while the light which is required for their rational apprehension is withheld. There are certain things which the Lord deeply conceals from us, because our ignorance respecting them is a blessing, and knowledge would be productive of the greatest derangement and misery. To some of these I intend to direct your attention, as presenting subjects of reflection suitable to the present season, when we are more particularly invited to look back upon the past and forward to the future.

I. God has revealed to us that he is ever with us, withholding us from the evil and the hell to which our corrupt nature constantly and powerfully tends, and

bending and leading us by innumerable means to goodness and heaven; but he at the same time entirely withholds from us all conscious knowledge of his presence and operations. We know that the Lord is with us, but we feel as if we were alone. We know that he inspires every good affection and thought, yet we feel as if we ourselves produced them. We know that without him we can do nothing, and yet we feel as if every mental and bodily act were entirely our own. The combination, in this instance, of the secret and the revealed is grounded in the profoundest wisdom. By the revealed truth on this subject, we are enabled to see with the understanding and acknowledge with the heart, that the Lord is all in all. This enables us to have a sense of our entire dependence upon him, and a conviction that in him we live, and move, and have our being. At the same time, by having no consciousness of the power by which we are upheld and led, our rationality and liberty are preserved inviolate; and we are more able to realize the Lord's divine purpose in revealing and concealing his saving operation, that we may, with freedom and delight, do all the words of this law. The most injurious effects would result from a manifest perception of the divine presence and operation, of which we are the favoured but unconscious subjects. If we had a sensible perception of the inflowing of life from the Lord, we would lose our sense of individuality, and cease to be anything more than mere automatons. But supposing that a sense of our individuality remained, we would be deprived of all true free-will and reason.

We could have no sense of independent thought and feeling, but would be carried along irresistibly by the sensible influx of love and light from God. Indeed, we could have no existence as rational and accountable beings, nor be capable of a state of conscious happiness. We cannot therefore sufficiently adore that wisdom and goodness that has bestowed upon us so absolute a sense of proper personal existence, which secures to us the blessings of a perfect individuality. What our Creator has concealed from our sense he has revealed to our reason, and given the combined blessings of ignorance and knowledge. We are able clearly to understand that we live in him, since even reason can perceive that there can be but one life and one fountain of it to created beings. From this conviction we can acknowledge our dependence on God, as him who only hath life in himself, and be kept by it in a humble sense of our own nothingness. At the same time, by the absence of all consciousness of the inflowing of life from the Divine Being, we are granted the enjoyment of life as much as if it were our own independent possession. The secret and the revealed are in this instance most wisely balanced, and show the highest evidences of design, and not only of design, but of benevolence. This economy of the Creator is in itself sufficient to convince us how much we are under the care of a Being who has created us for happiness, and how wisely he has provided the conditions for securing it.

But there are some other points, the consideration of which is more particularly suited to the present season, and on which we shall see not less clearly the divine



wisdom and goodness in the secret and in the revealed, and the evils that would arise out of a different economy.

II. God has made known to us by revelation that we are the subjects of an ever-watchful and overruling Providence, to which all the future is present; but he has deeply concealed from us all prospective knowledge of its results in the issues of life. The past and the present are ours; the future belongs and is known to God only.

The desire which, in all ages, men have manifested, and the efforts they have made, to lift the veil that conceals futurity, and presumptuously enter the sanctuary where the Lord dwells in the thick darkness of his inscrutable providence, indicate the activity of the desire to be as gods, and to usurp the divine prerogative of knowing the good and evil of the future, which God has so mercifully concealed from us, and to use this knowledge in determining the events of life. This disposition may be seen in the magic and astrology, the auguries and oracles, of ancient times, and, besides some remnants of these that have descended to us, in the clairvoyance and spiritualism of the present day, so far as they are employed for the purpose of penetrating into the future. These and all such attempts to wrest its secrets from futurity conceal within them a desire to anticipate and forestall the providence of God, and a forsaking of the Word of Life, the only authorized source of knowledge, for the dictates of a blind superstition, or the delusive promptings of spiritual agents.

Considered in its religious and moral aspect, the desire and effort to penetrate futurity is the extreme of impiety and folly. It is impious; for not only is it attempting, by force or stratagem, to gain possession of knowledge which God has manifestly intended to withhold from us, and reserve entirely for himself, but it is endeavouring to see the future events of life from an infinite and not from a finite point of view, and attempting this for the purpose of bending the future circumstances and issues of life into conformity with the views of natural prudence, and the desires of natural affection. The Divine Being has given us revelation, reason, and experience for our guides. From the experience of the past we are able to draw conclusions as to the probabilities of the future. We know that certain principles have a necessary tendency to corresponding actions, and that these actions are likely to be followed by certain consequences. We have seen their effects in the past of our life; we can infer their probable consequences in its future. We know infallibly the eternal results of certain principles and actions; but of their temporal issues there is no absolute certainty. We cannot tell that our best efforts, even when originating in the best motives, will be crowned with the desired success. There is, therefore, at all times, and in all circumstances, reason to place entire reliance on Divine Providence, and especially to commit the future to him who alone is able to regulate our needful share of prosperity and adversity. There is nothing contrary to the order of providence in cherishing hopes or making calculations for the future

of our temporal life. But these should be so tempered with the pious sentiment, that God is the sole disposer of events, as to prepare us for recognizing his hand in the result, whether it be favourable or opposed to our natural interests and inclinations. To look into the future, so far as we can do so by the light of revelation, of reason, and of experience, is not only our privilege, but our duty; but to desire or attempt to see by a light above that which the Lord has given us for our guidance, is to be guilty of that rebellion which is as witchcraft, and of that stubbornness which is as iniquity and idolatry.

But the desire to penetrate into the future is a sign of folly as well as of impiety. To know with certainty any of the events of our future life would destroy both our peace, our security, and our usefulness, and subvert all the principles of our human nature. It would remove all motives to action, destroy the freedom of the will, suspend the proper functions of understanding, and render experience and revelation useless. If we could see with certainty the agreeable or prosperous circumstances that Providence has in store for us, hope and truth would fail, and life and labour would become more irksome and oppressive than those of the most cruel and hopeless slavery. If, on the other hand, the future disappointments, losses, and bereavements of life could be opened to our view, every calamity would become a permanent instead of a temporary affliction. The strength of mind required for the event would be more than expended in its anticipation, and the heart, oppressed with an unreal

sorrow, would probably cease to beat before the day of trial came.

But it is unnecessary to dwell on a subject which every one of any reflection is able clearly to perceive. Yet, to hold up our fallacies to the light of truth is often necessary and profitable. It enables us to see more clearly, and to feel more deeply, the wisdom and goodness of the arrangements which Divine Providence has made for our welfare. Instead of cherishing a secret desire to see into the future, we may learn to adore that Providence that has shrouded it in impenetrable darkness, and that has so entirely removed from us a load of care which would have driven us to despair or madness. Nor is it our only blessing that the Lord has removed that care from us; he has taken it upon himself, by that means placing us under the protecting and providing circumspection of his infinite wisdom, instead of leaving us to the direction of our own finite and imperfect intelligence. The divine care and circumspection are exercised over us every moment of our lives, both when we sleep and when we are awake, ever providing what is most suited to our states, and making the things of time conducive to the interests of eternity. Have we not, then, abundant reason to dread the least approach to that impiety and folly which seek to know what God has been pleased, in his wisdom and mercy, so entirely to conceal?

III. There is one other instance, or one which may be singled out from the events of the future, in which we may see the evidences of the goodness and wisdom of the Lord in revealing and yet concealing the appoint-

ments of his providence—revealing so much as is necessary and profitable for us to know, and reserving to himself the knowledge which it would be in the highest degree injurious to us to possess.

Revelation declares, and experience testifies, that it is appointed unto all men once to die. But while the Lord has made known to us that we are the subjects of this inevitable decree, he has most mercifully and wisely concealed from us the time of our departure. By this admirable combination of knowledge and ignorance, we live in the certain conviction of our mortality, and yet are relieved from all unnecessary anxiety about the future, so far as respects the period of our removal; being thus altogether freed from the many and great disadvantages which the suppressed knowledge would inevitably have entailed upon us. Here, indeed, is a case in which we have the knowledge of a future event—one that is beyond all doubt and independent of all conditions—and are only kept in ignorance on the point which it would be injurious for us to know. If human wisdom could have been consulted as to how the knowledge of the fact itself could be given separate from the general knowledge of futurity, and not only deprived of the disadvantage of prospective knowledge, but turned to a positive advantage, it would have been difficult indeed to procure the proper solution of the difficulty. But divine wisdom has solved the problem, and has not only taken away the evil of foreknowledge, but has turned it into an important means of improvement and happiness. Divine Providence has in this case so perfectly balanced the

certainty and the uncertainty, the revealed and the secret, that a great positive good results from the equilibrium. By the knowledge of our mortality we are reminded that the world is not our home; by our ignorance of the term of our probation, we are left in a state of liberty to prepare for another and a better. This, indeed, supposes the knowledge not only of our mortality, but also of our immortality. Without the knowledge and belief of our immortality, there would be little advantage in being aware that the duration of life is uncertain. It might even be made the reason for acting upon the sensual maxim, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But even the natural man derives from the secret and revealed part of this event, the motive to reflect on a future life and the power to prepare for it. To the Christian the fear of natural death is swallowed up by the love of eternal life. He knows that temporal life will have an end; but he also knows that the end of temporal life is the beginning of life eternal. With him, therefore, the knowledge of mortality is more than counterbalanced by the knowledge of immortality. But the Christian sees and admires the divine wisdom in concealing the time when the one shall be succeeded by the other. The advantage of this concealment does not consist entirely in the inducement which it holds out not to put off repentance. It is well if the uncertainty of the duration of life leads to amendment. But its principal use is, that we may not be driven to repentance and amendment, but left in freedom to choose between good and evil, life and death. No

radical change of heart can take place while we are in a state of mental bondage; and all fear, and especially that which arises from imminent death, is such a state. The impressions made in such states, and the recollections connected with them, may afterwards lead to a real and permanent change when spiritual freedom is restored, and the mind is left to act from liberty according to reason; but these states themselves are not the times of genuine repentance. There is, it is true, a fear that lies at the foundation of repentance, but it is the fear of spiritual death, not of natural death. The fear of spiritual death has in it something of the love of spiritual life; just as the fear of natural death has in it the love of natural life; and it is in this love, not in that fear, that the first germs of genuine religion are implanted. Religion, therefore, dwells with love and hope, not with fear and despair. There is, indeed, something of fear in all love; but that which is in love is holy fear, which is a fear to injure and offend the object loved. Such fear, though not the real ground in which religion is implanted, is yet a guard to protect it from violation. If, therefore, we would be truly religious, we must use our liberty while we possess it and our reason while it is calm; then will religion be our solace in times of trouble, and our chief delight in seasons of peace and enjoyment; and it will remove all distrust, anxiety, and fear for the future.

We have now arrived at a new point in the progress of time. Another has been added to the years of our present life. We have acquired another year's knowledge and experience. In looking back, it may be well

for us to reflect whether our improvement has been equal to our means and opportunities. We have seen the unfolding of providence during a period which was once future; and we are now able to say how far we have recognized, and now recognize, the divine government of love and wisdom in our past experience; how far we feel grateful for the blessings we have received; and how far we are humbled by the losses and trials we may have experienced. We may now also look forward to the new period that has commenced. Nothing can enable us to look more calmly and cheerfully to the future, than the conviction that the Lord has reserved the knowledge of its events and issues entirely to himself, but has given us the assurance, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father who is in heaven, and that he will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. All that he requires of us to insure his blessing is to do his commandments. And we preserve ourselves in the best state to do his commandments when we relinquish all care for the future, and all desire to be wise above what is written. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." A holy dread of looking into the secret things which belong to the Lord, and an earnest zeal to know those things which, being revealed, belong to us and to our children, are equally necessary and alike conducive to our doing all the words of the divine law, obedience to which has the promise of this life and of that which is to come.



## SERMON VII.

### JESUS WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

“ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

LUKE XIX. 41.

WITH the exception of the Lord's praying for his enemies on the cross, his weeping over Jerusalem presents the sublimest moral spectacle that the world ever beheld.

Degenerate as human nature is, and through long ages has been, yet the history of mankind gives instances of noble-mindedness that do honour to humanity. It records instances of purity in the midst of corruption, tenderness in the midst of cruelty, disinterestedness amid prevailing selfishness. When such cases stand out from the general depravity, while they serve to make the prevailing darkness visible, they give us cause of gratitude to Divine Providence, that even in the worst of times the landmarks of virtue are never entirely removed, and that the dove finds in some bosom a refuge from the pursuit of its destroying enemy. But all such cases are but partial and imper-

fect manifestations of goodness compared with that of the Son of Man. He came to manifest a love and accomplish a work which had no parallel in earth or in heaven. His love was the pure disinterested love of the whole human race; and he came to work out, not a partial but a universal, not a temporal but an eternal good for men; he came to redeem them from the power of hell, and save them from the corruption and the misery of sin. As such a Redeemer and Saviour, the Lord had to contend with the whole power of evil both in the spiritual and in the natural world. In this great work he stood alone—the only man; for “of the people there was none with him. His own arm brought salvation unto him; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them.” And not only were there none of the people with him, but all were against him. Even those whom he had come to deliver from captivity were leagued with their captors, and were the eager instruments of Satan in his attempts to defeat the purpose of redeeming love. They had made a covenant with death, and with hell they were at agreement. And in nothing is this more fully and clearly brought out than in the treatment the Lord received at the hands of the Jewish people, who constantly met his beneficent labours for their welfare with hatred and persecution. It was when the rage of his enemies was nearly at its height, when the chief priests, and scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him, that the Lord, beholding their city, wept over it. Truly sublime is the spectacle which this act of the Saviour presents. Angels must have beheld it with indescrib-

able emotion, though few, alas ! on earth were disposed to look with any feeling interest upon it. It is, however, though sublimely affecting, more fitted for reverential and silent adoration than for the tongue of men or of angels.

Let us then make some reflections on the subject more befitting to us as feeble creatures, whose highest conceptions can never realize more than a faint outline of the moral grandeur of a scene which the highest human eloquence could only tarnish and obscure.

There are but two instances recorded of Jesus having wept: he wept over the city of Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. These two instances are exceedingly interesting and instructive, regarded in more than one point of view. They are interesting and instructive considered simply as exhibitions of the Lord's character in relation to men whose states, and whose dispositions to himself, were not only different but opposite. Lazarus was the friend and disciple of Jesus; the men of Jerusalem were his bitter and implacable enemies. Yet the Lord's love was manifested with equal tenderness to both. He commiserated the states of both, and the depth of his commiseration was such as to cause the tears to gush forth from his eyes. These two cases most strikingly and affectingly exhibit what the Scriptures in so many forms and in so many instances declare, that the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; that he causes the sun of his love to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends the rain of his truth on the just and on the unjust.

There is, however, another aspect in which these two kindred acts of our Lord are to be regarded. On those two occasions the Lord had before his view not only Lazarus and Jerusalem, but those of whom they were the types. He had before him the church among the Jews, represented by Jerusalem, and the church about to be raised up among the Gentiles, represented by Lazarus. When the Lord wept over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus, he mourned over the spiritual states of mankind, both in the Jewish and in the Gentile world. Both Jews and Gentiles were included under sin; but their states were extremely different. The Jews had sinned against the clear light of revelation, the Gentiles had sinned against the dim light of tradition. Both were in darkness; but the one was in the darkness of voluntary error, the other in that of involuntary ignorance. One had a name to live, but was in reality dead and full of corruption; the other was dead, but had received the germ of a new life, which the Lord was about to call into activity, and bring forth into actual existence. While, therefore, the Jewish church, like Jerusalem, was about to perish, the Gentile church, like Lazarus, was about to be raised up into new life. Although the Lord wept over both, as they represented humanity in its utterly fallen, prostrate, and helpless condition, yet there was an essential difference in the Lord's human feelings, as expressed in his weeping over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. The same divine love was the source, the same divine mercy was the fountain of his tears; but those which he shed over Jerusalem were

the tears of sorrow, while those which he shed at the grave of Lazarus were, besides, the tears of sympathy. How different, therefore, was the Lord's language respecting them. Looking, though on another occasion, not only at the present, but at the past and the future of Jerusalem, the Lord, in that beautiful apostrophe to the iniquitous city, exclaims, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" In the Jewish church, every messenger sent by the Lord to warn and exhort the people had been treated with hatred and persecution; every good and truth revealed from the Lord, to teach and lead them in the way of heaven, had been destroyed, trampled upon, and violated; and it was now about to fill up the measure of its iniquity in the attempt to destroy the divine truth itself, by crucifying the Just One, in him who was the very Word itself made flesh. What could more completely effect the consummation of the church amongst them? It was when looking at the future of the Jewish church, as well as of the Jewish people, that the Lord wept over this final ruin; and it was in reference to this that he then said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come that thine enemies shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest the

time of thy visitation." The destruction of the city and the dispersion of the Jews were but the material, though terrible, consequences and signs of the entire subversion of the Jewish dispensation.

When the Lord wept at the grave of Lazarus, how different were his sentiments, how opposite the result! Not death but life, not destruction but restoration, then formed the theme of his discourse, and the fruit of his operation. To the mournful regret, the obscure faith, the distant hope of Martha, the Lord said, "I am the resurrection and the life; thy brother shall rise again." Then did the Lord, from the great voice of his love, utter the command of his truth, "Lazarus, come forth;" and the dead came forth into light and liberty, the material type of that spiritual resurrection which the Lord, as the resurrection and the life, was about to give to the human race through the church he was about to raise up among the Gentiles, and which he gives abundantly to all who hear and obey his voice.

Thus did the Lord's weeping flow from his pure and tender love to the universal human race, and evince his desire to save and to bless all.

It is a circumstance highly deserving of our attention, that while we read in the Scriptures of the Lord's weeping over the sorrows and the sufferings of others, there is no instance recorded of his ever having wept over his own. Direful as were his temptations, severe as were his sufferings, cruel as was his death, no tear was ever shed by the Lord on account of them, either in the contemplation or in the experience. When, in the depth of that unspeakable agony in the garden of

Gethsemane, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and his prayer was for the passing from him of the full cup of approaching suffering; when, on the cross, the utterness of his despair was expressed in the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" even in these cases which so strongly express the truth that Jesus suffered, there is not one word to indicate such a fact as that Jesus wept. His tears were shed, as his sufferings were endured, for others, not for himself.

Instructive as this subject is, viewed in reference to the Lord, as indicating the intensity and impartiality of his love to his creatures, whether they are good or evil, and to his church, whether she is faithful or unfaithful, our reflections on it would leave one important use unanswered, unless we considered it more particularly than we have done in reference to ourselves, and to the feelings and the conduct which it teaches us to manifest to one another.

Christianity is the representative of Christ upon earth. It is the means by which his love and truth are brought down into the hearts, the homes, and the affairs of men, the instrument by which the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his reign is to be established for ever. To be such a medium and instrument, Christianity must be pure and sound. Hitherto it has but imperfectly accomplished its mission, because it has but imperfectly sustained its character. Yet, with all its imperfections, Christianity has exercised a most beneficent influence over mankind, and has been a mighty power in the

world. Although it has not tamed the human passions, and united men and nations in the bonds of peace and good-will, it has, to a certain extent, shed a humanizing influence over the regions that acknowledge its sway. There is more of human sorrow for sin, more of human sympathy with suffering, in Christendom than in heathendom; and there is more done to repress the one and to alleviate the other. If Christianity were an adequate embodiment of the truth and love of Jesus, it would show forth far more perfectly and effectively the spirit and purpose of the divine-human Saviour. It is this peculiar character of the author of Christianity that gives it its humane spirit and its humanizing power. "We have not an high priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but one who was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." This is the secret of the influence and power of Christianity. It contains, as it reveals, a divine humanity—a humanity that bridges over the chasm which sin had made between God and man, and establishes a medium between them by which the love of God can enter into the human heart, and clothe itself with the spiritual love of doing as Jesus has done. The Christian disciple is to imitate his Lord. Nay, those very human feelings which his Saviour manifested when he wept over the city of Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus are to be those of the Christian. All such feelings, when genuine, are inspired by that very love from the ardour of which the Lord mourned over the sins and sympathized in the sufferings of his creatures. We may briefly advert, therefore, to the



manifestation of the love of the neighbour, as flowing from the love of the Lord, in the two distinct acts of Christian sorrow and Christian sympathy.

Mercy is love grieving. Evil has caused the divine love to assume a new form and a new name; it has changed love into mercy; for evil has made man the agent of sin and the subject of suffering. But there are two kinds of suffering, as there are two classes of sufferers. The sinful suffer by yielding to sin, the righteous suffer by fighting against it. Such, at least, is the case with regard to spiritual suffering. Temporal suffering falls to the lot of the evil and the good; for it is the fruit, not necessarily of actual, but of hereditary evil. Yet, as evil is the remote cause of suffering, so is the repression or removal of evil the final cause of suffering, as a permission of Divine Providence.

I. The sinful are properly the objects of Christian sorrow. No one that knows the value of the human soul, and can realize the consequences of unrepented sin, but must mourn with bitter grief over the condition of those who are living in the violation of the divine law, or in the utter neglect of all the means of salvation. When the prophet Jeremiah contemplated the prevailing wickedness of his times, he exclaimed, "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" It would avail, indeed, but little merely to sorrow or to weep over the sins of others, either within the church or beyond it. Christian sorrow must be practical; it is not Christian

unless it is so. We must endeavour to remedy what we see cause to lament. We must not suppose that a wide field and large means are absolutely necessary. The machinery of Christian associations is requisite for reaching and dealing with the evil that lies beyond our personal reach. But, besides this, there is a sphere of practical usefulness that belongs to every one, and in which he can best work by himself. So, to a great extent, did our Lord work. Within this sphere our personal influence, our advice and example, can be brought immediately to bear in our efforts to diminish the sum of evil and the cause of misery. Nor are we to think that heinous sins only are to be assailed, and great sinners only are to be made the objects of our compassion and efforts. These are the least hopeful cases. To discountenance and check the smallest evil may prove the means of preventing a greater sin. This is a duty we owe to one another. And one of the truest signs of Christian sorrow for the sins, and even for the frailties of others, is shown in the Christian endeavour to check evil in its incipient state. One of the most important signs of the dawn, in the present time, of a brighter day for Christianity, is the union of Christian philosophy and benevolence in the efforts that are made to prevent social evil and misery, by the education and training of the neglected and destitute children of our rank civilization. Yet it must be admitted that, notwithstanding all that is or can be expected to be done to cure sin and relieve suffering by anticipation, there must be much that remains to be met of both in their aggravated form, and where a radical cure can in few

instances be expected to reward our labours. Yet let us remember that we are the disciples of him who wept over Jerusalem when he beheld it. To him the hearts and final destiny of every one of that vast multitude were known. From us such a knowledge is concealed. Yet we cannot contemplate the spiritual condition of our great cities, in which evil, and we hope good also, is more fully developed than in smaller congregations of human beings, without feeling more deeply Christian sorrow for the state of our fellow-creatures, and be moved with a more ardent desire to benefit them by improving their state and condition.

II. If the wicked are properly the objects of sorrow, the righteous are especially, though not exclusively, the objects of sympathy. One of the duties of Christian charity is to mourn with those that mourn, to weep with those that weep. In our own sufferings, both of mind and body, and both of a spiritual and natural kind, we yearn after human sympathy as well as pray for divine support. The Lord gives aid and consolation, not only directly by the influence of his own divine Spirit of love and truth, as the Comforter, but indirectly through the sympathetic affections of congenial minds and kindred spirits. What our hearts crave and our necessities demand, Christianity provides and Christian charity supplies. The religion of the Christian church is founded upon mutual love, and therefore upon mutual sympathy and aid. Christians are not simply to love one another; they are to love one another as the Lord has loved them. The Lord loved them by entering into all their states, and

sympathizing with them in all their troubles and distresses. "In all their affliction he was afflicted; he bare our griefs, and carried our sorrows." The incarnation took place on the principle of sympathy; and those who would be instrumental in carrying out its grand purpose of uniting all hearts in the bond of mutual love, must not neglect to seek the joy of love through sympathy with suffering. The spiritual occasions for sympathy will remain as long as evil is man's inheritance; and the natural causes as long as disorder and derangement exist as its results. But our sympathy, like our sorrow, must be practical. We must not say to the afflicted, Be ye comforted; nor, "if a brother or sister be naked, or destitute of daily food, must we say unto them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled." We must pour the oil and wine of love and truth into the wounded spirit; we must judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow.

Among all the sorrows that the Christian feels, there is one that forms the foundation of all others, and which must enter deeply into his soul. Sorrow for his own sins is the beginning of true sorrow for the sins of others. Before one can truly shed the tears of sorrow for the sins of others, he must first shed the tears of true penitence for his own. It is this that softens the heart, and enables it to feel for others in their affliction. For any one to have known the plague of his own heart, to have felt the power of divine love in its removal or alleviation, is to possess the true secret of Christian sorrow and sympathy. While, therefore, our love, imitative of that of our Lord, should embrace

all, it must be our object to remove from our own minds those evils that form the obstruction to the descent and diffusion of the Lord's saving mercy in the world. One of the means, undoubtedly, of removing evil and misery from ourselves is to labour to remove them from others. We must not suppose that we are to leave others uncared for, and care only for ourselves. It is not by constantly turning our eyes inward, and endeavouring to discover our own imperfections, that we can best remove them. Our danger does not consist in looking outward, and caring and labouring for the reformation or comfort of others; but, while doing this, in neglecting to examine and improve ourselves. The importance of self-examination and improvement arises from the circumstance that our souls are saved, not only by doing good, but by ceasing to do evil, and this includes the purging our good intentions and deeds of the evil of self-love and glory that may lurk secretly in them. In this way only can our sorrow and sympathy be truly Christian. That our sorrow and sympathy may be truly spiritual in their nature, and truly beneficial in their results, they must be the sorrow and sympathy of the Lord in us and through us. It is the Son of Man dwelling in our hearts that alone sorrows and sympathizes with his sinful and suffering creatures. It is he that still weeps over the iniquities and miseries of mankind; for no tears are pure but those that we shed from his love and mercy dwelling within us. Even the tears of penitence that we shed for ourselves have no efficacy but as they flow forth from the godly sorrow which he inspires.

But the Lord is not only the origin, but he is also the object of all true Christian sorrow and sympathy. Our true and high object in ministering to the sinful and the afflicted is to bring them out of sin into righteousness, and out of sorrow into joy. In doing this we are only being workers together with the Lord—he working within in the heart, we working without in the outward mind and conduct. Our sorrow and sympathy are only so far true, therefore, as they can unite with his, and as they have in view his exaltation in the hearts of others, and the establishment in their life of the government of his will and wisdom. In this way we truly realize the truth of the Lord's words, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

How beautiful is Christianity, viewed as the expression of the love and mercy of Jesus Christ! It is the very essence and form of perfected humanity. As such, it is the power by which humanity is to be perfected—by which the perfect man, Jesus, works in his fallen children, to restore them to the image and likeness of himself. Let us look to the Divine Man through the veil of the Gospel history, and endeavour not only to adore him as there revealed and exhibited, but to realize, in our measure, his sublime tenderness as he beheld the city and wept over it.

## SERMON VIII.

### THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT.

“And Moses<sup>e</sup> charged the people the same day, saying, These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.”—DEUT. xxvii. 11-13.

THE solemnity with which the law was originally promulgated from Mount Sinai in the wilderness, and afterwards ratified by the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, evinces its importance, and the perpetual obligation of obedience which it imposes upon the church and people of the Lord. Next in solemnity to the promulgation of the law from Sinai was its rehearsal at Gerizim and Ebal. In the eighth chapter of Joshua we read of this grand and imposing ceremonial. When, after the passage of the Jordan and the overthrow of Jericho and Ai, the congregation had arrived at the place which Moses previously appointed, “Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal, and they offered thereon burnt offerings. And he wrote there, upon the stones,

a copy of the law of Moses. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side, before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, as well the stranger as he that was born among them; half of them over against Mount Gerizim, and half of them over against Mount Ebal: and afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."

Mounts Gerizim and Ebal were separated from each other by a beautiful valley of no great width. Into this valley the ark of the Lord was borne, and there placed by the Levites, surrounded by the other officers of the congregation; while upon the sides of the two mountains the whole congregation stood as in a natural amphitheatre, in view of the Levites and of each other.

The scene thus chosen was both suitable in itself, and, from historical associations and divine promises, exceedingly appropriate for the object that had brought them together. The country into which they had now entered was that through which Abraham had passed as a solitary stranger, when, in obedience to the divine command, he left his kindred and his father's house to go to a land which God was to show him. The place where the ten thousands of Israel were now assembled was near the spot where the Lord had appeared to the



Patriarch, and given him the promise, "Unto thy seed will I give this land; and where he builded an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him;" for in the twelfth chapter of Genesis we read that "he passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plains of Moreh." It was near this spot, too, that Jacob saw, in his dream, the mystic ladder which reached from earth to heaven, on which the angels of God ascended and descended, and at the top of which appeared the Lord himself, symbolizing the divine economy through visible and invisible agencies—the revealed Word and angelic beings, by whom God and man, and heaven and earth, are connected together—the mysterious life which his own journey, and that of his posterity from Egypt to Canaan, represented. Sichem, in other places called Shechem, to which Abraham came, was situated in the valley between Gerizim and Ebal, where the children of Israel were now assembled. Its locality is still further indicated by the record in Genesis; for after the Lord had appeared unto Abraham, "he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Hai on the east;" the same Ai which the children of Israel had taken immediately before building the altar on Mount Ebal. It was this same Shechem with whose king Jacob made an agreement to give his daughter Dinah to his son in marriage, which was frustrated by the perfidy and cruelty of Simeon and Levi. The inhabitants of Shechem were descended from the ancient church, and had the remains of that church amongst them. It

was from that church, which had existed in Canaan, and of which the nations now dwelling there were the hopelessly corrupt posterity, that the different localities of the land derived their representative character and spiritual signification. Near the spot, then, where, four centuries and a-half before, the promise of the whole land had been given to the yet childless Abraham and to his seed for ever, his seed, now become as the sand upon the sea-shore and as the stars of heaven for multitude, are assembled to hear and to consent to the solemn conditions on which they are to possess and enjoy the promised inheritance. Grand must have been the spectacle, solemn and impressive the ceremony. When the Levites spake, and said unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, "Cursed be he that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place," the awful imprecation was confirmed by the unnumbered multitude who stood upon Mount Ebal, simultaneously raising their voices in the utterance of the solemn "Amen;" and not less impressive, though less deep, must have been the response of the tribes assembled on Mount Gerizim, when the blessing was pronounced on him who remained faithful to the worship of the only living and true God. And while the numerous blessings and curses were one by one rehearsed by the Levites, and responded to by the people, what heart, beating in unison with the myriads assembled, could but feel the deep solemnity of the occasion, and thrill with delight or tremble with fear, as the conse-

quences of obedience and disobedience to the divine law were so impressively placed before them. Such a scene, with the law itself engraven upon pillars of stone, left there as a memorial to perpetuate the remembrance of the event and purpose, might be supposed to have long exercised a beneficial influence on the individual and national mind. But the Israelites, though susceptible of a vivid, appear to have been little capable of deep or lasting impression in favour of true religion; and often did they neglect that divine law to which, on this great occasion, they had so solemnly consented.

The use designed to be accomplished by this solemn assembly was not, however, limited to those who composed it, nor to the dispensation with which it was connected. The whole ceremonial was typical. It shadowed forth the practical consent of the Christian to the conditions on which he is to acquire and hold possession of a far richer inheritance than the land of Canaan, and on which alone he can secure a blessing or escape a curse immeasurably greater than any that can be experienced in this world. The ratification, in the holy land, of the law which had been received in the wilderness, represented the confirmation in the life of the laws of divine order, at first received into the mind.

To see this subject as represented in the historical event before us, we must know the symbolical meaning of the place, the people, and the ceremony. In early times, when the analogy between spiritual and natural things was understood, mountains towering

to heaven were regarded as the symbols of holy love, the highest of religious principles, and divine worship was celebrated on them, because love is the ground of true adoration. When two mountains are mentioned together, they signify love to God and love to man. In this signification they include the principles of good and truth from which these loves are formed, and the faculties of the mind in which they reside. Love to God is the primary good of religion, and has its seat in the will itself, being the good of love; love to man, or charity, is the secondary good of religion, and has its place in the intellectual will, being in itself the good of truth or of faith. Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, on which the congregation of Israel are now to stand, have this sacred signification. Gerizim is the primary, Ebal is the secondary love. This may appear from some particulars respecting them. Of the two mountains Gerizim was the more lofty—a type of the highest principle. Gerizim was on the south, and Ebal on the north, indicating relative clearness and obscurity. “Gerizim,” as a name, expresses, in its secondary sense, the idea of the mountain being then, or having once been, richly wooded; while “Ebal” signifies the stony mountain;—names which, in the language of correspondence, point to the two principles of goodness and truth. The altar was built upon Mount Ebal, and there, as a memorial, the stones were set up, on which the law was written very plain: and the interior memory, on which is inscribed the memorial of our spiritual states, the remembrance of God’s

mercies and our duties, is more directly connected with the understanding. Another important particular is the division of the tribes—a division which had been appointed by the Lord himself while the Israelites were yet in the wilderness. On Mount Gerizim were stationed the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, Benjamin; and these were to respond to the blessings when pronounced by the Levites. On Mount Ebal were placed the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali; and these were to respond to the curse. There are several particular inquiries which this part of the history suggests.

We cannot suppose that this arrangement was made without a reason, and yet the historical sense affords no light to enable us to discover one. We naturally inquire, why were the twelve tribes thus divided? Why were certain of them placed on Mount Gerizim and the others on Mount Ebal, and why were those on Gerizim to bless and those on Ebal to curse? To obtain a satisfactory answer, we must attend to the representative character of the tribes of Israel. The twelve tribes represented all the principles of goodness and truth, which form the church or kingdom of God in the renewed mind. These principles, or graces and virtues, produce a variety of individual character, according to the relative place they occupy in the mind and to each other. This variety is strikingly represented in the Word, where the tribes, which represented those graces, are enumerated under very many different arrangements. Here

they are divided into two classes, and to this it is important to attend.

Those who are in any degree acquainted with the representation of the twelve tribes, as made known in the spiritual sense of the Word, will perceive from the slightest glance at the names, as enumerated and distinguished in the text, that the tribes which were to stand on Mount Gerizim have relation to principles of love or goodness, while those which were to occupy Mount Ebal represent principles that have reference to truth or faith. To enter into a particular explanation of each tribe would occupy too much of our present discourse, nor is it required for our present purpose. We may, however, remark, that of the six tribes appointed to stand on Mount Gerizim, two were the descendants of the sons of Rachel, and the four others the descendants of sons of Leah, the two wives of Jacob; while the six tribes which were appointed to stand on Mount Ebal were descendants of the sons of Leah and of the two handmaids. Of the two wives of Jacob, Rachel represented the spiritual, and Leah the natural affection of good and truth; and the handmaids represented the lower affections which serve as aids to the higher. The four sons of Leah, too, the fathers of the four tribes that stood upon Gerizim, when considered in reference to her other sons, have more relation to principles of goodness; while of the six tribes that stood on Mount Ebal, the two tribes descended from Leah and the handmaids have more relation to truth. Thus we find that Leah's first-born son was amongst the tribes that stood on Mount

Ebal, while her next three sons were among those which stood on Mount Gerizim. The signification of these four sons of Leah, and of the tribes descended from them, affords a satisfactory reason for their different location. The order of the birth of the sons of Jacob represented the order in which the spiritual affections are successively produced in the Christian mind.

Reuben, the first-born of Leah, signifies faith in the understanding; Simeon, her second son, signifies faith in the will; Levi signifies charity; and Judah, love. First, faith in the understanding, then faith in the will, next charity, and lastly, love; this is the order in which the graces of the religious life succeed each other in the progress of regeneration.

Reuben, therefore, the first-born son both of Leah and Jacob, because he signifies faith in the understanding, is placed first in the list of the tribes that were appointed to stand on Mount Ebal; and Simeon, her second son, because he signifies faith in the will, is placed first in the number of those who were to stand on Mount Gerizim.

But in all the different enumerations of the tribes of Israel, the one whose name stands first gives the leading character to the whole series. In the present instance we have two series, and the general character of each may be known from the name with which it commences. The first series commences with Simeon, the second with Reuben. As Reuben represents faith in the understanding, and Simeon faith in the will, we are enabled, on this ground, to see that the tribes that

stood on Mount Ebal represented the intellectual, and those on Mount Gerizim, the voluntary principles of religion; the one representing the principles of truth, the other the principles of goodness; the one faith in the understanding, the other faith in the will.

When the general signification of these two classes of the twelve tribes is perceived, it will be understood why the six here first-named were placed on Mount Gerizim to bless, and the other six on Mount Ebal to curse. The principles of goodness in us are those that acknowledge and secure the blessing; the principles of truth in us are those that recognize and acknowledge the curse.

To see the singular and imposing ceremony in its instructive beauty and practical importance, we must bring the whole transaction within the compass of a single mind, and endeavour to view it as a matter of individual experience. The scene and the ceremony present a type of a regenerate soul, when the Christian, having, like Israel in the desert, received the law into his mind, and passed through the purifying trials of temptation, has attained a state in which the law is to be more fully exhibited in the life, and the blessings promised to obedience are to be more perfectly realized. The ark of the Lord, containing the ten commandments, surrounded by the priests the Levites, and, next in order, by the elders and other rulers of Israel, with the vast multitude of the people stretching out beyond them on the sides of the mountains, present an image of the regenerate mind, when the Lord has placed his law in the inward part, and written it on the heart,



and when, in consequence, all the affections of goodness, and all the perceptions of truth, of every kind and degree, are brought by divine wisdom and goodness into their true order and relation to one another, and form one grand harmony in the renewed mind, in the inmost of which the Lord is present in his law of eternal order.

The Levites who immediately surrounded the ark are the affections of love and charity in the heart, by which the divine law is inmosty received and constantly cherished; the elders, officers, and judges, are the governing principles of good and truth, which are subordinate to these; while the people represent the innumerable affections of goodness and perceptions of truth which are lowest or outermost, and which have their residence in the natural mind. Thus the priests, the judges, and the people, image the different Christian principles as they stand in harmonious relation to each other in the mind, when in a state of heavenly order.

The scene presented on this solemn occasion has so striking a resemblance to assemblies of the church in heaven, as described in the book of Revelation, that we cannot fail to perceive in the earthly an image of the heavenly. In the fifth chapter of Revelation we read, that, when the heavens were opened, John beheld the throne of God; and in and round about the throne four beasts, and after them four and twenty elders, and beyond them a multitude of the heavenly host, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. Be-

sides this resemblance to Israel in character, number, and arrangement, there is a not less striking resemblance of the ceremonial itself. For while the angels, with a loud voice, glorify the Lord, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." To this the four beasts respond, "Amen," and the four and twenty elders fall down and worship him that liveth for ever and ever. In the seventh chapter, where the sealing of the twelve tribes of Israel is described, the ceremonial is repeated, for the great multitude which no man could number cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb;" and the angels, and the elders, and the beasts pronounce the Amen. Can we doubt that the divine wisdom which commanded the assembling of the tribes on the mountains of Canaan, and exhibited to the spiritual sight of John a multitude of the heavenly host, intended them as types of a like heavenly state of order and harmony, and both as alike calculated to instruct us in the mysteries of the kingdom? For the kingdom of heaven is order and harmony, peace and joy.

But to see the nature of this state, we must compare it with an earlier and less perfect state of the spiritual life. One principal difference between the state of reformation, and that of regeneration, consists in this:

During the earlier state, the spiritual and natural minds are at variance, and even at enmity with each other; in the more advanced state, the spiritual and natural minds are in agreement, and act in unity. When the law was revealed from Mount Sinai the people trembled, and stood afar off—a true symbol of the state of the natural mind not yet in accordance with the spiritual, where the truth is received. On the other hand, the simultaneous response of the people assembled on Gerizim and Ebal to the divine law, when uttered by the priests, represented the co-operation of the natural mind with the spiritual, and the unity and harmony resulting from it.

The variance and hostility of the natural and spiritual minds, while man is being regenerated, is much treated of in the Scriptures; but they may all be expressed briefly in the words of the apostle,—“The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit.” This lusting of the spirit and the flesh, or of the spiritual and the natural mind, against each other, is the ground of the conflict of temptation, which is made a means of removing the enmity, and bringing the two minds into agreement.

To this end “we must put off the body of the sins of the flesh, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” This the Israelites did representatively by leaving Egypt and wandering forty years in the wilderness, till all their rebellious members had perished, and passing through the Jordan, and entering Canaan; those who

were assembled on Gerizim and Ebal being an entirely new generation, none of whom, except Caleb and Joshua, had been twenty years old when they quitted the land of their bondage.

In a corresponding manner must we not only give up the pleasures of sin, but put off the lusts that would lead us to live therein, that the mind may be replenished with new affections, born of the Spirit through the inner man, and bearing the image of the Saviour. When this spiritual birth is accomplished, through self-denial and the washing of regeneration, then are we enabled to stand on the mountains of love and charity, and renew our covenant with the Lord, by whose truth we have been led, and by whose mercy we have been sustained, in our heavenward journey. All our thoughts and affections must conspire to consent to the solemn conditions of enjoying the spiritual and eternal inheritance for which regeneration prepares us. Every divine law which has been inwardly received into the heart will find a practical acknowledgment in the life. The affections of goodness in the heart must respond to the blessings; for every blessing comes through those affections: and the perceptions of truth in the understanding must respond to the curse; for truth gives us to see the eternally destructive consequences of disobedience. All protection and blessing comes from the Lord, but his blessing and protection come through his love and truth as they exist in our own wills and understandings. Love and goodness give us to feel how blessed it is to fulfil the laws of divine order, revealed from heaven for securing our happiness,

and truth enables us to perceive how fearful is the curse of living in the violation of them. Love brings us into possession of the good—truth warns and guards us against the evil.

In calling up to our view the august scene of Israel on the mountains of Canaan, renewing their covenant with Jehovah, on the condition of keeping his holy laws, and consenting to the consequences of obedience and disobedience, let us endeavour to transfer the image to our own minds.

Let us think of the moral grandeur of that state which it was intended to portray—a state in which the law of life is inscribed as an everlasting memorial on the soul's imperishable memory; its living truths cherished in the inmost of the renewed will and understanding, and brought out in deeds of holiness in the life.

Such a state marks our actual introduction into the church, its principles having found an abiding-place in our hearts. In still greater perfection will this state be realized by us when we enter heaven, where the ordained myriads of the just made perfect exhibit on the grandest scale the perfected form of harmony and beauty, resulting from the concord of angelic minds, in every one of which grace and virtue are combined; for the church and heaven are like themselves in the least and in the greatest.

## SERMON IX.

### THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND.

“If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

MATTHEW XV. 14.

THE Lord declared the Pharisees to be blind leaders of the blind. By their false teaching they led those astray whom it was their duty to instruct and guide. Nothing else could be expected from them, since, under the guise of great humility and sanctity, they concealed an inordinate love of glory and of gain. When pastors are of such a character, the flock must suffer. Not only are they deprived of the instruction and example which the sacred office was designed to provide, but they are more or less injured by the influence which self-love and worldly-mindedness never fail to exercise, however insensibly, over the minds of others. The Lord's words contain, therefore, a solemn warning both to those who teach and to those who are taught; to those who lead and to those who are led. It warns them of the ill consequences which must arise from their abiding in the darkness of selfish and worldly

views; and shows the necessity of attending to the divine counsel, to call no man our master in the things of religion, but to look to the Lord as the only teacher, whose authority ought ever to be regarded as supreme, and from which that of his servants derives all its authority.

It is not, however, to this view of the text that I intend to direct your attention. The words of the Lord have another and more practical meaning. While they convey a solemn lesson to all who are invested with the office of religious instructors; they are designed for the edification of all the members of the church, without respect of office; for every part of the divine Word contains a sense which is applicable to all men, without distinction or exception, as subjects of regeneration. This being the case, it follows that where the literal sense treats of *persons*, the spiritual sense treats of *principles*; and leads us, therefore, to look within ourselves, to examine our principles, and read in our own minds the lessons of wisdom which the words of the Lord contain. The faculties of will and understanding, when unenlightened and un-governed by the Lord's divine truth, are the blind and the leader of the blind. The human will, considered in itself, is in its very nature blind. It is simply an impulsive faculty: it loves, desires, prompts, but it has no power of discernment; it cannot even see the character of its own desires, nor direct them to proper objects. But the Creator has bestowed upon us another faculty which serves as eyes to the otherwise blind will. This faculty is the understanding. The under-

standing is therefore the eye of the mind; and, in Scripture, is frequently mentioned under that name. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" The eye of which the Lord here speaks can be no other than the intellect; the light which the eye is to the body is the truth of which the intellect is receptive; and ignorance, error, and falsehood, are the darkness by which the light is extinguished, or into which it is turned. In the Old Testament, one of the blessed results of our Lord's coming in the flesh is exultingly spoken of as that of opening the eyes of the blind; and when the Lord was upon earth, he repeatedly restored sight to the blind, thus bestowing an inestimable natural blessing, and representatively performing the greater work of opening the understanding to the perception of his own blessed truth.

We proceed, then, to point out some cases in which the Lord's words are exemplified.

I. In the Scriptures, blindness is not always mentioned as a sin,—“Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, that he was born blind;” but when not a sin, it is at least spoken of as a calamity,—“If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” Ignorance is the simplest form of mental blindness; and ignorance is a calamity because it leaves the noble faculty of understanding uninstructed, and, as a consequence, leaves the



will unimproved and its impulses undirected. Ignorance was called by the ancients the disease of the soul, as it was supposed to be the origin of all our mental maladies. Ignorance in itself is not, however, properly a disease. It is, as it exists in our days, an effect and sign of a diseased state of human nature; for if man had continued in the order of his creation he would never have grown up in intellectual blindness. He would, like the inferior creatures, have come naturally into the perception which includes the knowledge, of all that his love and his wants required. Disease has its seat in the will, and disease in the will causes ignorance and error in the understanding. But when we speak of ignorance as a state in which some persons are, we speak of ignorance as a relative state. There is, in the ordinary condition of man, no state of absolute ignorance but in infancy; and that period of life, so far from being one of actual evil, is one of innocence; and his state of ignorance at this period of life makes the human being capable of innocence; for ignorance, though it contributes nothing to the actual regeneration of the soul, presents no actual obstruction to the saving influence of love upon the heart, by which infants are kept in innocence; nor is there, on the other hand, anything in simple ignorance through which hereditary evil can manifest itself. In pure ignorance there is neither the power of actual good nor of actual evil. There is therefore no power in it of imputation, nor, consequently, of condemnation nor justification. But as man advances in life, and the intellect becomes developed, the latent dispositions of the will begin to

manifest themselves; and, unless they are restrained by education and corrected by training, they will break out into disorders and evils. The ignorance of adult age is only partial; it is the defect, not the absence, of knowledge; but that defect is often so great as to disqualify the mind for seeing the real distinction between the true and the false in faith, and the genuine and spurious in action, and is liable to be led astray. Hence such minds, even when well-disposed, are exceedingly liable to adopt crude views of religion, and allow their undisciplined affections to vent themselves in imprudent charity and extravagant devotions. They are liable, and therefore easily led, to think that religion consists essentially in some extraordinary frame of mind or acts of piety; and, with the view of being holy, they cherish a state of mind which in a great measure unfits them for the calm reflections and patient activity which are characteristic of true holiness. The good itself which individuals in such a state perform is no doubt productive of good, but it is likewise productive of evil; for, being done without discrimination, it may do a mistaken good to the evil, and thereby do an unintentional evil to the good. The understanding is the alembic in which the affections are purified—in which the good that comes from God is freed from the dross of our own earthly thoughts and affections. But how can a separation of the evil, and consequent purification of the good, be effected, if the understanding is not sufficiently informed, so as to be able to distinguish between the true and the false, the genuine and the spurious? In every mind, as it is

by nature, self-love and the love of the world are the springs of action; and nothing can enable us to discover and remove them but an understanding instructed in the knowledge of divine truth. When men are destitute of that knowledge, they are in the condition of the blind leading the blind; for the will is left without the guidance which divine wisdom intended it should find in a well and rightly-informed understanding.

II. There is, however, a blindness much more serious in its nature, and more injurious in its consequences, than simple ignorance—a blindness which arises from positive error. False persuasions, though only fatal where they are confirmed and loved, are always injurious, and often dangerous. Every false principle is the negation of a truth; and as every truth teaches and leads to some particular good, a false principle unavoidably negatives, intellectually at least, the good along with the truth which teaches and even contains it. This negation does not always consist in an open denial of truth. The truth may remain in name, while its opposite error exists in reality. It is not always by open denial that truth is rejected or destroyed, but generally by the under currents of fallacious reasonings, which sap the foundations of truth, while its form and its name remain. It was in this way that the Pharisees acted with regard to the laws of the Old Testament. They did not deny or neglect the law; on the contrary, they made large professions of veneration for it, and devoted themselves with exemplary patience to its study. At the same time they made it of none

effect by their traditions: they destroyed its spirit by their glosses, and its importance by their trifling applications. They made it strict in all but in principle, and employed their ingenuity so to lighten its weightiest duties, that men might perform them without ceasing to be sinners. They carefully paid tithe in mint, in anise, and in cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth. These, indeed, they should have done, and not left the others undone. The law is similarly treated in the present day by those who possess a clearer light to guide them. It is acknowledged; but its power for good is in a great measure destroyed; for it is taught that no man has power to obey it, and that salvation is to be procured by faith without works, which are no otherwise regarded than as the fruits and evidences of saving faith. It is evident that such views have a tendency to make the law of God of none effect, and to blind the understanding to the perception of genuine truth, and leave the will to the misdirection of a false and delusive theory. It is, however, to be remarked, that not all who are in error are necessarily in evil. With many, erroneous views on points—even vital points—of religion are only in the memory, but have never been admitted into the heart, nor carried out into the life. Such, therefore, suffer no serious injury from mistaken views, provided they love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and strive to do his commandments.

III. Another and still greater degree of mental blindness arises from the falsification of truth. False principles bear false witness against the truth, but falsifi-

cation makes the truth bear false witness against itself. To make the truth bear false witness against itself, it must receive a construction not only different from, but opposite to, its genuine signification, or a conclusion must be drawn from it which destroys its use. As an example of this kind we may take the declaration of the prophet (Isa. lxiv. 6), that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. By this we are to understand that all the good we do *from ourselves* is in itself evil, being defiled with the idea of our own merit, and corrupted by the principle of our own self-love. The words of the prophet are designed to guard us against trusting in our own righteousness, and to lead us to seek and to trust in that righteousness which comes from God only, and which alone is spiritual and saving. But when these sacred words are so explained as to mean that the best deeds of man, in his best state, are sin; that all personal righteousness is filthy and worthless, and that therefore we must trust in a righteousness, not done by us, but imputed to us, then is the truth falsified and destroyed. It destroys all proper distinction between the good which a man does from himself, and that which he does from God—between that which he does to promote his own glory, and that which he does to promote the glory of God. Such views of divine truth have an unavoidable tendency to lessen the importance of practical religion, and lead men to trust to intellectual faith and outward piety instead. When the light of truth is thus turned into falsity, instead of directing the mind to the attainment of substantial, genuine goodness, it may induce a state of false

security, and end in the broad road, which leadeth to destruction. To this state the Lord alludes when he says,—“If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” Falsification turns truth into something opposite to itself, and induces greater darkness of mind than that which arises from false principles, induced by the appearances of truth in the letter of the Word, confirmed as genuine truths by fallacious reasonings.

IV. But we now come, lastly, to contemplate a blindness different, not only in degree but in kind, from those already considered. The states hitherto spoken of are such as exist from a blind understanding leading a blind will: that which we are now to notice arises from a blind will leading a blind understanding.

False persuasions and evils of life have a twofold origin: they may originate in the understanding or in the will, in the thoughts or in the affections. Those principles which have their beginning in the thoughts of the understanding may be said to be from without, being imbibed from parents and teachers. So long as these are confined to the thoughts, they do not defile the man; but if they are afterwards confirmed, and come forth into evils of life, then they defile the man. They have passed from the understanding into the heart, and from the heart into act, and have become a man's own, and continue with him till removed by actual repentance. But there is another state distinct from this, in which evil and falsehood have the first origin in the heart itself. In such cases evil has its

birth essentially from within, being the spontaneous and voluntary fruits of a depraved heart and a deceitful mind.

As these two kinds of evil and false principles are different in their origin, so also are they different in their character. The false principles and evils of life into which a man declines through education or example, are less malignant than those which flow immediately from the love of evil. The evil which comes from a depraved will is more directly opposed to the love of God and the government of his divine goodness; that which comes from a misguided understanding is more opposed to the love of the neighbour, or the government of the divine truth. Hence it is that that which comes forth immediately from the heart has a more interior ground in man, and moulds him more entirely into a form of itself. The distinction which is thus found to exist amongst the evil in this world, is also found to exist amongst them in the eternal world, where they are distinguished as the Devil and Satan.

When the will is essentially and interiorly evil, the understanding must be essentially and interiorly false, even though the mind may be enriched with the knowledge of goodness and truth, and the outward life undeformed by actual evils. When the eye is evil the whole body must be full of darkness, for evil blinds the understanding to the perception of truth. Evil cannot do otherwise than hate truth, and therefore cannot believe it. There may be, indeed, a semblance of the belief and acknowledgment of truth. By education, and by acting in conformity with the

general usages of society, a faith and conformity may be impressed on the outer man; but this is only an accretion, and forms no part of the essential life; it belongs rather to the society in which a man lives, than to the man himself, and is thrown aside when that society is not immediately in view. A man's intellectual principles are not of necessity those of which he thinks, but those which he *thinks*; they are not necessarily those which form the *subjects* of his thoughts, but those which form the *objects* of his thoughts. If the objects of the thought are good or evil, the thoughts themselves must be essentially so; for the object is the life or end of thought, and the subject may be but the means by which it is to be attained.

The false principle which flows spontaneously from an evil heart, is not so much a perversion of truth as a perversion of goodness: it is not so much a false persuasion as an evil thought; and in its operations upon others labours rather to turn their good into evil than their truth into falsehood; or seeks to destroy truth by insinuating an evil end. Thus the Pharisees did not deny the reality of the Lord's miracles, nor, like some modern infidels, attempt to trace them to natural causes, but applied themselves to pervert the end, by ascribing them to diabolical agency. In such cases we see the nature of this state—a state in which truth is hated, and therefore rejected, even when it cannot be denied. The blindness in such instances is wilful. Truth is not rejected because of any obscurity or apparent inconsistency in itself, though these may be



made the pretext; but it arises from a predetermined opposition to it, which would only be increased were the truth presented in its greatest simplicity and beauty. The understanding in such cases is the mere slave of the will, and ministers unscrupulously to its purposes and desires. One of this character may pursue his ends either by means of religion and morality, or in defiance of them, as best suits his purpose; but whatever be the outward appearance, the same inward state exists; and if confirmed, that state must terminate in the ultimate immersion of both will and understanding in the gross darkness of falsehood and evil, and, finally, in the pit of destruction. For in this state the Lord's words are most fully verified,—“If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

The warnings of divine wisdom are severe but salutary. They are designed to lead us to look into ourselves, and watch the tendencies of our own heart. Our Lord has declared that the heart is not only desperately wicked, but that it is also above all things deceitful. It may not only deceive others, but it may deceive ourselves. Such being the case, we can see the wisdom and goodness of God, in not leaving us to be governed by the blind impulses of our depraved affections. He has given us an understanding by which we can receive the light of heaven, and by that light look into our hearts, discover their real state, and resist their natural tendencies. By resisting their tendencies, we acquire the power of controlling and correcting their passions. Habitual resistance increases

that power, and is the means of forming and strengthening good principles and affections. The Lord builds up within us a habitation for himself, and establishes within us the kingdom of his own goodness and truth. By his own truth he rules the affections and guides the thoughts, leading us gradually out of evil and error into goodness and truth. While we walk in the light of truth, we are able to avoid the stumbling-blocks with which evil besets our path, and escape the snares and the pits which self-intelligence prepares for us.

## SERMON X.

THE LAW OF THE BURNT-OFFERING AND THE ASHES  
OF THE ALTAR.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt-offering: It is the burnt-offering, because of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it. And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh, and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed with the burnt-offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. And he shall put off his garments and put on other garments, and carry forth the ashes without the camp unto a clean place. And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out: and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it; and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”—*LEVITICUS* vi. 8-18.

THE Mosaic law is now commonly regarded only as a monument of what once was. The church and polity of the Israelitish people having long since come to an end, the laws which regulated their religious worship and their civil state are now numbered with the obsolete statutes of departed nations. These laws are still, indeed, regarded with veneration as the relics of a high

antiquity, and the memorials of a divine dispensation, and much learning and research are employed to illustrate their meaning, and to show the wisdom in which they originated. Few attempts are made, however, to discover in them any spiritual sense, beyond that general and obscure typology which recognizes the sacrifices of the Israelitish church as shadowing forth the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, with some other points in their history as relating to the Christian life.

But is not such a view inconsistent with the Word itself? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Word of God shall stand for ever." Dispensations may come to an end, but the divine truth is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The Word is given not for one age, but for all ages; not to serve one fleeting dispensation, but to bring in a dispensation of everlasting righteousness, and to shed its light over the highest states to which the human mind can attain. This it can do only by disclosing a higher or more interior wisdom to every succeeding dispensation; and what it can disclose it must contain. We find our Lord drawing forth the principles of the Christian church from the laws of the Jewish economy. "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: but I say unto you, that whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The law, therefore, which prohibited murder and adultery to the Jew, forbids hatred to the Christian. But the same law yields a still higher sense, and teaches a sublimer morality to a still higher dispensation, even that of the

New Jerusalem ; because action can now be traced to a still deeper ground than it could be under the first Christian dispensation. We are now enabled to see, not only that murder proceeds from hatred to the person of a man, but that it has its secret ground in hate to the very principles which constitute humanity, which are the principles of Goodness and Truth. The law, therefore, in this higher sense, prohibits all hatred of, and contrariety to, the good and the true, not only in others, but especially in ourselves, the destruction of these principles in our own minds being the very ground of the desire to destroy either natural or spiritual life in others.

This spirituality and consequent power of reaching the higher springs of human action, are not confined to the moral, but extend also to the ceremonial law. The same laws which regulated the worship of the Jew, regulate the worship of the Christian. The ceremonial law, though dead as to the letter, still lives as to the spirit. The dispensation, with all its types and shadows, has for ever passed away, but the anti-type and the substance will for ever remain. In their highest sense, the Jewish sacrifices represented the glorification of the Lord. The altar was a symbol of the Divine Humanity, and the fire upon the altar was a symbol of the essential Divinity. The animals offered on the altar represented the human nature which the Lord assumed and glorified in the world.

The Jewish sacrifices, while in their highest sense they represented the glorification of the Lord, in their secondary sense represented the regeneration of man ;

the regeneration of man being an image of the Lord's glorification. They, therefore, also represented Christian worship, because regeneration is the end of all worship.

The worship prescribed by the law of Moses consisted chiefly in sacrifices and burnt-offerings, to mark the distinct nature and effects of worship as grounded in faith and in charity. In the sacrifice *part* of the animal only was offered; but in the burnt-offering the *whole* was consumed. Worship from a regenerated internal was represented by the first; but worship from a regenerated internal and external together was represented by the second. The animals offered were types of the affections and perceptions of the Good and the True, which are all derived from God, and are to be returned in humble acknowledgment and devout thankfulness to him again. By reconnection with their divine source they become sanctified to their possessor.

The law of the burnt-offering is that which is delivered in our text. As this was the most holy of all the voluntary sacrifices, as representing regeneration in its most complete state, and worship in its most perfect form, it was surrounded with more than ordinary formality.

In connection with this offering the general law is delivered, and its importance marked by its being no less than three times repeated, that the fire should "ever be burning upon the altar; it should never go out."

The fire upon the altar was the most striking emblem, in the Israelitish church, of the divine love itself. Whether we consider that love as it is in the

Lord, or as it is in the heart of the worshipper, the emblem is equally beautiful and instructive.

In the love of God we recognize the life itself, the all-originating, all-animating, all-supporting principle of Deity, infinite, eternal, unchangeable. It flows, without intermission and without partiality, to all the creatures to whom it has given existence; and is the origin and cause of all the innocence, happiness, and delight which exist in creation.

As the love of God is pure and unchangeable in itself, so must it exist as a pure and constant affection in the heart of every true worshipper. Love to the Lord is the life of every pure affection and of every holy thought. Every grace that enriches the mind, every virtue that adorns the character, has its life in the love of God. Charity and faith and works have nothing of vitality in them but what they derive from love to him who is the beginning and end of all excellence.

The love of God is not a mere feeling of the heart, but a principle to be also embodied in action—a vital principle that must pervade the whole mind and life, entering into all our civil, moral, and religious duties, inspiring them with a motive which makes them all minister to the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbour.

How essential, then, to the existence of vital religion, is the preservation of the sacred fire! “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”

It is a general opinion amongst commentators, that the fire which burned for so many ages on the altar of the Israelitish church was first kindled from heaven.

This is concluded from the last verse of the ninth chapter of Leviticus, where 'the first offering of the high priest after his inauguration, for himself and the people, is recorded. On that occasion, when the sacrifice was prepared, "there came a fire from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat, which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces."

But the fire upon the altar, thus miraculously kindled, was afterwards supported by natural or outward means. The priest was commanded to lay wood on the fire of the altar every morning. Thus, while love, like the fire of the altar, comes from heaven, it can only be preserved by human instrumentality, and supported by the use of outward means. Love is the gift of God. Its reception and preservation depend upon man. Whenever piety lays her first offering on the altar of faith, founded on humility and self-denial, and built up by obedience, the fire of the divine love will descend from heaven and consume it. And the holy fire which thus descends, and enkindles the thoughts and affections, will be preserved burning in the heart, if supplied with that fuel which is necessary to continue its existence as a principle of spiritual life in finite natures.

The wood which was laid upon the fire of the altar signifies the good of the Christian life—the righteousness which is the support of inward love. Every lesson of true wisdom we acquire, every act of sincere piety or charity we perform, is a laying of wood upon the fire of the altar; it feeds the love of God within



the heart, and causes it to burn with greater intensity. Without such support, the love of God must either die away, or degenerate into a spurious and irregular passion of the mind. It must degenerate into a mere feeling, instead of being, as it ought to be, a principle which rests on the whole circle of our religious duties. Loving exists in doing. "He that doeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me." Doing the will of God is the aliment by which the love of God is supported in the mind and life. The Lord therefore said concerning himself, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

The divine economy for the support of our spiritual life is analogous to that by which our natural life is maintained. Life is from God, and is his continual gift, and the vital heat itself of our bodies is from a spiritual origin; but this life and this heat are preserved by our own use of means.

But the analogy extends still further than this. As the fire upon the altar fed itself by consuming the wood which the priest laid upon the altar, so the life, the vital principle, carries on that mysterious process of combustion by which the gross food we eat is changed into a vital fluid, which circulates through the whole body to renew and repair it.

How much, then, does it concern us to attend to the regular and faithful performance of those uses which are essential to the existence of the divine love in our hearts! Every day and every state has its duties, upon which our welfare essentially depends.

The soul, like the body, requires to be nourished

and exercised, that its true life may be preserved, or even that its health may be maintained. The soul, for its support, requires knowledge. It is therefore our duty to give a portion of our time to the acquisition of useful information, especially that which relates to our spiritual state and concerns. The holy Word is the great source of religious truth. We should therefore daily resort to it, for the purpose of acquiring some of those lessons of wisdom which are so abundantly given in its sacred pages, "line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." We should daily learn and inwardly digest some of those holy truths which God has revealed from himself through heaven for the support of our souls. And while we learn from the divine Word, and reflect on what we learn, we must remember that all its truths and doctrines were given for this end—that the "man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Goodness is the end of truth. We learn that we may do. We must therefore endeavour to practise what we know; since knowledge without practice, and truth without good, are rather the means of injury than of benefit to our souls. And while we regard it as a duty to acquire the truth and do the good of religion, let us not forget to return them in holy worship unto God, knowing that these and all other blessings derived from him should be returned to him again in humble and grateful acknowledgment. By daily and faithfully performing these duties, we both present our offering upon the altar and lay wood upon the fire that is to burn and consume it.

But the priest was not only commanded to lay wood on the fire of the altar, he was also required to remove the ashes which remained after the burnt-offering was consumed.

It would prepare the way for an explanation of this command by again adverting to the analogy between the economy of the body and that of the soul—the natural and spiritual life of man. In all the substances which nature supplies for the support of our bodies there is only a certain portion of nourishing matter; and the vital principle separates and selects the useful from the useless, appropriates the better part to its own use, and casts the rest away.

It may also be asserted, without irreverence, that all the truths which the Divine Being supplies as food for the soul contain only a certain portion of nourishment. No truth that comes to man is absolutely pure or simple. Every truth which the Word contains, though in its origin divine, comes to man clothed in appearances. Without this covering—this grosser part—truth would neither be adequate to the apprehension, nor adapted to the states of finite beings. Neither man nor angel can receive divine truth in its own light and purity. It must come to them embodied, as it were, in something of the comparative grossness of their own conceptions and feelings; for, compared with the High and Holy One, the purest in heaven are far indeed from perfection. Pure or absolute truth cannot, therefore, be given to finite minds. It must come to them veiled in a covering partaking of their own necessary imperfections.

But this, which to some might seem an imperfection of revelation, is its perfection, as a medium for the progressive improvement of the church on earth, and also of the church in heaven. While the Word is adapted to the apprehensions of angels and men, every truth it contains is capable of being more and more divested of its shadings, and of being more and more clearly seen and fully appreciated and appropriated. And as divine truth in itself is infinite, the progressive unfolding of that truth will continue through eternity, and be an ever-increasing source of wisdom and love to angels and men.

But when we speak of the progressive attainment by the regenerate of more interior perceptions of truth by the removal of the covering by which that truth had been obscured, we are to reflect that this implies advancement to a higher degree of life, by a corresponding removal of some of our own imperfections. Progressive improvement implies a putting off as well as a putting on; it is the result, not only of the acquirement of something new, but of the removal of something old—something that has served its use, and would only be an obstruction to progress if retained. This process goes on continually both intellectually and morally. In this world we learn words to acquire and express ideas; we acquire elementary knowledge to arrive at principles. But when we have attained the end, the means are only regarded as things subordinate because accessory, as containing no mental nourishment in themselves, though the necessary channels by which that is conveyed to the mind. Those who make all

wisdom to consist in words or in knowledge, feed upon ashes, and let the sacred fire go out. This is true spiritually as well as naturally. To place religion in knowledge and faith, to the neglect of charity, is to mistake the means for the end, and to abide in that which perishes, instead of seeking life in that which endures. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." We must "leave, therefore, the principles (or elements) of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection."

As inhabitants of the present world, and subjects of its grosser imperfections, the removal of the ashes teaches us a lesson of deep importance. We must not only leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, we must leave also our first motives in acquiring them. In our first attainments even in religion we are much influenced, if not actuated, by the love of glory and by other affections of our fallen nature. And long after we have been intellectually convinced that all good is from God, we may cherish meritorious feelings on account of our virtuous deeds. Self-love and the love of the world may be able to influence long after they have ceased to rule. The love of the Lord may have been enkindled in the heart, and the outer man may still betray some of the weakness and waywardness of the degenerate self-hood, and these may insinuate themselves into even our best actions. These imperfections form the alloy of our better qualities, and can only be gradually separated from them. We do not here allude to gross evils. Those who have really entered on the

regenerate life are presumed not to be guilty of such. Nor are such evils signified by the ashes which remained on the altar after the burnt-offering was consumed. Evils of this kind were represented by the ashes which the people put upon their heads, and in which they rolled themselves, in their mournings and lamentations; those being the signs of mourning on account of the loss or the profaning of goodness and truth. So far as the ashes of the altar represented the evils of our nature, they represent those which are unintentional—those imperfections which adhere to those who sincerely seek the Lord—those thoughts and feelings of our imperfect nature which insinuate themselves into our good works, which it is our duty to remove when the good work has been performed, and which we have discovered in ourselves during its performance. It is during our actions that we are unable to discover the evils which still lurk in our hearts and minds; and even our best deeds may discover to us our greatest imperfections. And while every action of our lives may show us something in ourselves which requires to be removed, when the action is past we have the power given us to remove it; and removal of such imperfections is our duty; for, if anything which we know to be impure is allowed to remain, it will, like the ashes of the wood which was laid upon the fire of the altar, ultimately suffocate and extinguish the fire itself.

In a general sense, the ashes of the wood which was burnt upon the altar signify the residue of anything spiritual after the performance of use, and which,

having performed its use, requires to be removed, that it may make way for the performance of new uses. Such is knowledge in regard to wisdom, and natural affection in regard to spiritual love. Wisdom and love are the end; knowledge and affection are the means. And when the particular end has been attained, the particular means are removed—they cease to have that place in the mind's delights and affections which they formerly occupied. When a truth has been committed to the life, it vanishes as it were out of the memory—it is removed from the immediate field of intellectual vision, that its place may be occupied by some new truth, which leads to some new acquisition in wisdom, some new advancement in goodness. And not only is the intellectual residue to be removed, but the moral or voluntary also. For in the performance of every use, some affections are brought into activity which, though not in themselves pure, are yet useful as means. It is perhaps impossible to perform any good act or make any useful acquisition without some feeling of glory or other affection of the outer man entering into the act. In this ingredient of our nature, which can never, perhaps, be altogether separated from us, originates the desire of emulation, something of which exists even amongst angels in heaven, and which they also, like ourselves, require to remove, and do remove, after the performance of use.\* This separation is the removal of the ashes from the fire of the altar.

The removal of these imperfections is twofold. They

\* *T. C. R.*, 745.

must be removed from the internal and from the external man—from the intentions of the heart and from the actions of the life. In our text we find this twofold removal represented. The priest was to remove the ashes from the place where they were produced, “and lay them beside the altar;” and then, after changing his dress, was “to remove them from beside the altar, and carry them without the camp.” The first removal of the ashes represented the removal of imperfections from the inner man; the second represented their removal from the outer man.

Besides the illustration which we have given of this subject in the process of digestion, we may point out an analogy to this twofold removal by two separate acts in the hepatic purification of the blood, which is the life of the flesh. When the blood is purified in the liver, the separated matter—the ashes of this animal fire—is first removed into the gall-bladder, where it forms the substance called bile; and this is afterwards, as occasion requires, removed into another part of the body, where it performs an important purificatory function in the animal economy.

When the priest removed the ashes from beside the altar to the outside of the camp, he put off his linen garments and put on another dress; for the linen garments signified divine truths spiritual, such as they are in the perceptions and for the use of the spiritual mind, and by the other garments were signified divine truths natural, such as they are in the perceptions and for the use of the natural man. In other words, the linen garments signified divine truth such as it is in



the spiritual sense of the Word; the other garments signified divine truth such as it is in the literal sense of the Word. The spiritual sense of the Word is for the use of the internal man, for it unfolds causes and enjoins motives; and the literal sense of the Word is for the use of the external man, for it relates to effects and commands actions.

When the priest removed the ashes to the outside of the camp, he was commanded to put them in "a clean place;" that is, in a place by themselves, separate from every other kind of refuse. The meaning and force of this injunction will be seen, if we consider that we must have a clear and distinct view of our own imperfections, and of our spiritual distinctly from our natural imperfections. Those acts of removal or purification which we perform from a religious principle are entirely different, and should be seen to be distinct from those we may have performed from a natural principle. Every imperfection, also, which we remove, must be seen as it is in itself, just as it is necessary to the removal of evil, not only that we acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, but that we see our own particular sins.

Permit me, in conclusion, to call your attention to the portion of the divine Word we have now been contemplating. It is almost unnecessary to say, that the ceremonies enumerated in our text never could have been commanded from heaven but for some higher purpose than the direction of the Jewish priesthood. Those who acknowledge the divinity of the Word will see in this law evidences of its spirituality, and be able

to rejoice still further in the fullness of light which it contains. In this, as in all other parts of the Word, we may see something of the marvellousness and magnitude of the work of human regeneration, and may learn some lesson which may instruct us as to the means of our advancement in it.

Let us endeavour to improve our mercies by reducing to practice the knowledge we acquire. Let us remember that while the Lord, as essential Love, and Wisdom, and Life, imparts to us gratuitously and liberally of his fullness, we have imperative and most important duties to perform. Life, and love, and wisdom, are from the Lord alone, and so likewise are the means and the power to use them; but we must exert the power and employ the means, before we can derive any solid advantage from these gifts of divine goodness. The Lord enkindles his love in every heart that is open and prepared to receive it; he sanctifies every offering of humility and sincerity, and blesses every endeavour to discharge the duties which he has enjoined. But let us reflect that the divine operation can do little for us without our co-operation. We must be workers together with God. We must feed the flame and remove the ashes. And if we do these things regularly and faithfully, the divine love—the sacred fire from heaven, will be preserved burning continually in the inner man, warming the heart and enlightening the understanding, and shining forth in our lives, “so that others may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.”

## SERMON XI.

## THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.”—MATTHEW xx. 1.

IN the parable of which these words are a part, the Saviour represents himself by a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, and agreed with them for a penny a-day. He went out at the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh hour, and hired all he saw standing idle in the market-place. When the evening came, he paid them each a penny, beginning at the last; but when those came who were hired first, they murmured because they received no more than those who had laboured only one hour. Upon which the lord said to one,—“Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee.”

This parable is sometimes understood to teach that salvation may be secured at the last hour, and a reward

as great be obtained as if the whole life had been spent in the Lord's service.

There may be cases where the later repentant receives an equal, and even a greater reward; but this can only be where more has been accomplished in a shorter time, because the repentant has been more earnest, devoted, and laborious. The reward is measured by the amount of work accomplished, not by the time employed in performing it. There is every probability, however, that delay in commencing the religious life has the effect of at once augmenting our labour here, and diminishing our happiness hereafter; for he who puts off repentance strengthens the evil principle, and confirms the evil habit, and renders repentance less likely and more difficult.

The parable has been used to support the opinion we have now mentioned, by taking a natural, yet a mistaken, view of its particulars. Even in its plain literal sense it affords no real ground for such a notion as that which is engrafted upon it. The last hour of life, or the latest period of existence in this world, must be, not the eleventh, but the twelfth hour. Nor can the labourers hired at the eleventh hour be justly understood to represent those who repent and believe at the last hour of life, or under the fear inspired by imminent death. The labourers hired latest showed that they had no wish to be idle: they freely, and even eagerly entered when called into the service of the householder, and they worked in the vineyard as well, though not so long, as the others. They must therefore represent those who not only repent, but who

bring forth fruits meet for repentance; who not only have faith, but who perform good works, and who therefore, when they rest from their labours, have the works that follow them as the ground of heavenly reward, and the only one that the Scriptures recognize.

But there is another particular in this parable which has been misapprehended. The day alluded to in it is rightly understood to mean the day of probation; but the particulars respecting the hiring of the labourers have not been rightly apprehended.

It has been inferred that the day was of equal length with all the labourers; or that all candidates for heaven have their probationary day of equal duration. This, however, is far from being the case. With some the day of probation is long, with others it is short, with most it is different. Considered in reference to individuals, the different hours at which the labourers were hired denote the commencement of their day of probation as well as of their hour of labour. This will appear from considering the lord's address to the latest hired in connection with the circumstances. Each time he went out into the market, the householder appears to have hired all the labourers he found. "He went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a-day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right I will give you. Again he went

out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Those, therefore, who were hired at the eleventh hour would appear not to have been in the market at the ninth hour, otherwise they would have been hired; yet the husbandman addresses them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" It is not necessary to consider this idea as being strictly in accordance with the actual circumstances on which the parable is founded; but it seems both consistent with the structure of the parable itself, and with the spiritual truth it was intended to teach. The parable was intended to point out a difference in the duration of the probationary day; and since all are represented as coming at once to the twelfth hour, which denotes the end of life, but as entering upon their day of existence at various periods, so those who come last denote those who remain the shortest time in the world. Those who were hired at the eleventh hour are those who die in early life, or who pass into the other world soon after they have entered this; and the others according to the hour of hiring,—those who laboured longest being those who live longest in this world.

The last were called and made first, to teach us that those who pass into the eternal world in early life are all made partakers of heavenly beatitude, and attain to higher states of bliss than most others who remain longer here; while we are assured, by the giving of a penny to each, that the divine bounty is impartial, and

that all who will employ their day, however long or short, shall in nowise lose their reward.

If thus much is seen from the literal sense, the internal sense will place the subject in a still clearer light. In the internal historical sense the Jewish and Gentile churches are treated of in this parable. The Jews are represented by those hired early, the Gentile by those who were hired at the eleventh hour, at the end of the expiring church. The last hired in this case were made first, and the first last. Yet the last received their penny in a fulfilment of all the divine promises to them, and all their murmuring at seeing the same talent given to a younger servant was the effect of their own evil eye.

In this instructive parable another and still more interesting truth is taught. It shows us that the divine householder, whose vineyard is the church, ever desires the salvation of his creatures, and is constantly inviting them to enter into his service, that they may be partakers of his goodness, and be blessed with the reward of holiness. He himself expressed it by the prophet, "He rises up early" and teaches them, and "all the day long holds out his hands," even to the most rebellious of his people. His Spirit, his Word, and his providence are all unceasingly employed to bring men into his vineyard. He is willing to employ all, and leaves none idle who are willing to labour. He also demands of them a reason, when he comes to them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" to excite them to that self-examination which is the best preparation to successful labour. And if those who

are called accept the call, they receive that reward which a bountiful Master gives to his faithful servants.

But in the purely spiritual sense all that is recorded in the parable is applicable to one individual mind, and is capable of being experienced in it. In this sense the labourers are not regarded as persons, but as principles. The day is not understood to mean a period of time, but a state of life; the hours do not indicate divisions of time, but successive states of the regeneration. When our Lord said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" he evidently meant by the day, the whole of the regenerate life; and by its twelve hours he meant its particular states through which the regenerate pass. If, then, we regard the day in which the lord of the vineyard hired his labourers as denoting the whole period of the regenerating life, and consider the labourers as denoting the principles which are acquired, or successively come into active usefulness during regeneration, then those labourers first hired will be seen to signify the principles first acquired; and the labourers last hired will be seen to signify the principles acquired last. According to this view it is easy to see why the last were made first, and the first last, and why the first murmured on account of their hire. The principles we acquire first are naturally of a more general and external character, and consequently are less pure and perfect than those which are acquired in an advanced stage of regeneration. In the earlier stages of the regenerate life we are not in a capacity to receive or to practise the truths of religion in great perfection; but as we ad-



vance in goodness, truth finds a better soil in our hearts, and produces better fruit in our lives. In the earlier stages of the regenerate life, too, there is one feeling that insinuates itself into and taints all our religious thoughts and deeds. That feeling is merit. It is an affection deeply rooted in the human heart, and long after we have rejected it in theory we maintain it in practice. It is self-love under its most plausible and deceitful form. It cannot, however, be crucified at once: it cannot be seen in its true character but by means of the clear light of interior divine truth. We may, indeed, soon know and be convinced intellectually that there can be but one source of good, and that we can merit nothing for what good we may perform, since to God must belong all the merit of every virtuous action. But there is a wide difference between holding this doctrine theoretically and holding it practically. While we intellectually believe, and even maintain, that to us can belong no merit for righteousness, we may nevertheless be elated with praise and offended with just censure; we may be proud of our talents and our labours, and be envious of others who excel us and are more esteemed than ourselves. All this arises from the fact that, although merit has been rejected from the understanding, it is far from being rooted out from the heart. The nature and effects of merit are described in the murmuring of the labourers first hired, who complained, not because their just recompense was withheld, but because others were made equal with them. Those, on the other hand, who were hired at the eleventh hour denote

principles acquired in a more advanced state of the regenerate life.

The existence of this desire to merit salvation in the minds of external Christians, and its presence as a lingering feeling in the early states of the regenerate life, are indicated in the parable by those labourers who were first hired entering into an agreement with the householder, or the householder with them, for the hire they were to receive, before they commenced their labours. But there is nothing said of such an agreement with any of the other labourers. They were satisfied with the assurance of the householder, "Whatsoever is right I will give you." So is it with the spiritual labourers whom the Lord receives into his vineyard. Some are influenced by the desire to merit salvation. But even those who are of such a character as to be unable to go forward in the spiritual life without some view to recompense, are admitted into the vineyard, and are finally rewarded by divine justice. But more blessed are they who leave all the terms of recompense with him who is mercy, goodness, and justice; and who will give his faithful servants, who are sensible of their unworthiness and who trust in him, "whatsoever is right."

But the labourers have a distinct signification as to quality, according to what is denoted by the different hours at which they were hired. The number twelve always in Scripture relates to what is full and perfect, and eleven, in relation to twelve, a state which approaches nearest to fullness and perfection, and has more especial reference to a state of goodness. Three,

as also six and nine, from three being predominant in them, has reference to a state or to a principle of truth, and the labourers hired have more especial reference to truth than good, to faith than love. So long as we act from truth only or principally, we are more or less tainted with meritorious feelings. It is only when we act from goodness and love that those feelings are adequately subdued. When goodness comes practically to occupy the first or highest place in the mind, and truth comes to occupy the last or subordinate place, then the first is last, and the last first.

An inversion of state takes place in the course of the regenerate life. During the early stage of regeneration, which may be called reformation, truth is in the first place and good is in the second; for truth has first to be acquired, that by its means good may be known and cultivated. As in this first state the Christian disciple uses the truth of religion as the means of acquiring good, he therefore looks and proceeds from truth towards goodness. It is the same if we say that, in his first state, he looks and proceeds from faith to charity. Truth and faith are then in the first place, and good and charity in the second. But when good and charity have been actually acquired, the state is changed. The disciple no longer looks and proceeds from truth to good, or from faith to charity; but having attained the end, he acts from good by truth, or from charity by faith. Good and charity are now principal, and truth and faith are instrumental. Charity is no longer the handmaid of faith, but faith is the handmaid of charity. That which was first is

last, and the last is first. The true order of heaven is established in the Christian mind, and the reward is spiritual rest and life eternal.

Let us then examine well from what principle we serve the Lord. Let us study to know whether self is not a moving principle of action, and let us learn to leave the things that are in their nature behind, and pass on to those that are before, that we may exalt the Lord in our hearts, and glorify him in our lives.

The Lord is ever willing to receive us into his church and kingdom. Let us accept his conditions of salvation, which are not only free, but are accommodated to all. If we cannot as yet comprehend and receive his boundless goodness and unmerited mercy, he will condescend to agree with us for the wages we are to receive; but if we rely on his mercy and grace to give us whatsoever is right, we shall find ourselves richly rewarded. Having entered on the regenerate life, let us look forward to that state in which the first place shall be occupied by goodness and charity, whose supremacy bring fullness of joy to the heart and usefulness to the life.

## SERMON XII.

## LOVE TO THE NEIGHBOUR.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”—MATTHEW xxii. 39.

THE separation which is found to exist, almost universally, in the minds of men between inclination and duty, and between their ideas of their temporal and eternal interests, is a melancholy proof, not only of the corruption of the human heart, but of the blindness of the human understanding. It must be evident to every reflecting mind, that God our Creator and Law-giver could never make our interest and our duty to be at variance, and enlightened reason may perceive that there is a necessary connection between them. Duty consists in acting in harmony with the order which God introduced into the moral and physical world at creation. The laws of creation, of providence, and of revelation are but the imprinted footsteps of the Divinity, which his creature man should carefully mark and faithfully follow, as his interest as well as his duty.

Most men will readily acknowledge that such a life

is the only one consistent with, and conducive to, their spiritual interests; but their temporal interests they will suppose to be influenced by another law and course of action. This, however, is a fallacy. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that the real interests of mankind can ever be promoted by what is contrary to the laws of divine order. The appearances that favour the opposite conclusion arise from viewing individual interests separate from, or opposed to, each other, or to the general interests. Justly considered, the interests of humanity are the common interests to which every individual interest should have respect, and with which it should make one. Our own personal interest cannot be inconsistent with that of our neighbour; our duty to ourselves cannot be inconsistent with that which we owe to him. The divine law which commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves cannot be incompatible with the orderly and therefore proper love of ourselves; nor can it be opposed to our individual interests, however it may be to our disorderly, selfish inclinations, and to the false views of interest which those inclinations create. If this divine law were universally observed, or even if it exercised any considerable influence in society, the aspect of human affairs would undergo a great and beneficial change. If men loved each other as themselves, there would be neither war, nor crime, nor strife, nor even pestilence or famine; but the world would become, what it was designed by its Creator to be, an image of heaven, and a place of preparation for it.

What the world would become by the universal

prevalence of this divine law, it is the duty of the Christian to make it, so far as regards himself and his own influence. It is his privilege to see that his God, his neighbour, and himself, stand, according to the laws of divine order, in a harmonious relation to each other; and that the subordination of self-love to the love of the neighbour, and of the love of the neighbour to the love of God, can never be violated without inflicting an equal injury on the common interests of humanity and the individual interests of men.

We will turn our attention, then, to this secondary law—the law of love to the neighbour—which our infinitely wise Lord has revealed as the law of intercourse between man and man, and appointed for the government of his people.

We are so to love our neighbour as habitually to act towards him with the same justice, mercy, and sincerity as we would that he should do towards us.

The principle of love to the neighbour, under its most general form, consists of two great parts, and it must operate in two distinct ways. We must avoid doing what is injurious to the neighbour, and do what is beneficial to him. The first duty of charity therefore is, to do no evil to the neighbour; the second is, to do him good. The avoiding of all that would injure our neighbour is of much more consequence than a slight reflection on the subject might lead us to suppose. To act on the principle of doing no evil to the neighbour is to crucify the affections of self-love and the love of the world, which are the roots of all evil. This work of self-denial is the means of not only

preventing us from doing evil ourselves, but from being the occasion of evil in others. The evil we do may not only be the cause of suffering, but the occasion of sin. If we were often and seriously to reflect on the amount of evil which evil occasions, besides the tribulation it causes and the misery it inflicts, we would be impressed more deeply with a conviction and sense of the criminality of indulging the loves of our corrupt self-hood. When love to the neighbour is sincere, there will always be the negative as well as the positive part of virtue. Whom we love we fear to injure. Where this fear does not exist, there is no true love. There may, indeed, be the fear to offend; but this is entirely different from the fear to injure. The fear to offend may spring from a love engrafted on the merest selfishness; but the fear to injure can only spring from the living root of Christian charity. And so great is the difference between them, that some of the most disinterested acts of charity have to be performed at the risk of giving offence to those for whose benefit they are intended. Yet Christian charity does not love to offend. Indeed charity never gives offence. It is only those who are deficient or destitute of that grace who take offence at that which may be meant as an act of the truest friendship. Yet we are not to forget, that there are few in this world so perfected in the Christian life, as to exclude everything of uncharitableness from even their best actions.

The second part of charity, doing good to the neighbour, must follow or accompany the first—to do him no evil. The first must be done for the sake of



the second. To do good to the neighbour is the final end of charity; to do him no evil is a means to this end. The ceasing to do evil formed no part of the original law of mutual love. The introduction of evil into the world made that addition necessary, which, after all, is but an introduction to the law of love, that man in his original state required not to pass through. While we must regard the first part as indispensable, we must look to the second as the end for which it is to be done. We must therefore cultivate the active as well as the passive duties of neighbourly love, and make it our duty, that it may become our delight, to do good and to communicate.

Seeing that the principle of charity consists in doing good and in not doing evil to the neighbour, we shall now consider how this principle is to be carried out—in what way love is to operate upon the neighbour to his true and lasting advantage.

There are two great streams in which charity should flow—justice and benevolence. Acts of justice are the duties of charity; acts of benevolence are its benefactions.

Justice is the great work of charity. It is the greatest of our moral virtues, and the foundation of all others. Justice is the foundation of all order, and order is the means of conservation. It is the framework of human society; and it is the chief pillar of the church and of heaven; for justice and judgment are the habitation of the throne of God. If justice were the great rule of duty, the great law of action, there would be less need for many of those substituted aids

now wrung from the minor virtues for accomplishing the ends of charity, which ends are yet but imperfectly accomplished. If justice and benevolence were each to perform its due share in the labours of charity, the work would be well and successfully performed. But in the present state of things justice does so little, and leaves so much for benevolence to do, that it cannot be done well. It should therefore be the aim of the Christian to perform faithfully the *duties* of charity, in the first place, and then will the benefactions of charity follow up and complete the work. It is the more necessary that this part of the law of love should be attended to, because it is a prevailing error that charity, even in the enlarged sense of doing good, consists in something beyond the ordinary duties and uses of life.

The life of charity consists eminently in acting with fidelity in the function or employment in which we are engaged. To be just in our dealings, sincere in our professions, earnest in our endeavours to be useful in our station and calling, is the grand work of charity. All this is essential to the existence of human society, and most favourable to that state of the world which makes it the seminary of heaven. The Lord's kingdom in both worlds is a kingdom of uses, and those who live in the performance of uses in this world are in the fittest state to come into the performance of heavenly uses in the world to come. A life of usefulness, as it is most promotive of the good of others, is also most productive of good to ourselves. It preserves the faculties in a state of orderly activity,

and keeps the mind open to the divine influx through heaven; for the Lord through heaven flows into uses: heavenly uses enter into natural uses, and make one with them. It is by uses, therefore, that the world is joined to heaven, or angels to men.

But uses, in their extended sense, include the benefactions as well as the duties of charity—its acts of benevolence as well as of justice. It has been remarked that unfallen man was an object of the divine love. It was not till evil was introduced into the world, and misery overtook man as a consequence, that he became a subject of divine mercy. Love became mercy when man became a sinner. In like manner, had mankind continued in a state of integrity, mutual love would have found its work of use in acts of justice; but the misery to which evil has given birth has caused love to assume the form of mercy. In the present state of man and of society, we require to be benevolent as well as just.

Benevolence, or mercy, like justice, is active and passive. The passive part of mercy consists in forbearance and forgiveness; and this is a part which it is required frequently to act, as it must needs be, in the evil state of mankind, that offences will come. And although the wo is to the man by whom the offence cometh, we must be careful that it do not become the occasion of offence and of wo to us. Let it rather be the means of subduing evil in ourselves, and of overcoming evil with good. The active part of benevolence is more agreeable to our nature, as there are few hearts that are not susceptible of sympathy

with those who suffer either in body or mind. To stifle these is to do violence to our nature, and injury to our state. One of the uses of suffering is, no doubt, to excite sympathy in those who behold it. Religion teaches us to regulate and direct those sympathies, but not to suppress them. They are to be allowed to go on their mission of benevolence, but not to go alone. They are to be attended by discrimination and discretion—discrimination to distinguish their true from false objects, discretion to regulate their gifts.

Having now pointed out the nature of neighbourly love, and the way in which it operates, we shall proceed to inquire into the objects on whom it is to be exercised, or the extent of its operation, which is equivalent to answering the question: Who is my neighbour?

In the widest sense, the neighbour includes the whole human race. But a feeling of universal charity, like a conviction of general sinfulness, is too often found to be destitute of any love of particular objects, and is dissipated by its extended and indeterminate character. Universal charity must be made up of particular charities, directed to particular objects, and determined in particular acts. True charity begins at home, and extends her operations in all directions outwards. In a certain sense a man's nearest neighbour is himself. The duty of charity, which is first in regard to time, is for a man to provide for his own temporal wants and welfare. Before one can be useful to others, he must possess the means of usefulness. A man's first duty of charity is to provide for himself; and this he

may consistently with charity do, not only for the present, but for the future. If this seems too much akin to selfishness, let us reflect that no inconsiderable share of the demand for the benevolence of charity in the world arises from the neglect of this circumspection. For it cannot be said that all the temporal distress that exists in society arises from pure misfortune.

But a greater work of personal charity is to provide for his own spiritual wants and welfare, and with the view of being qualified to do spiritual good to others. The great spiritual work of charity, in regard to himself, is the work of his own regeneration, which is effected by having evil cast out from his heart and life, and good implanted in its place. By this means he acquires the power, of being truly useful in the extended sphere of charity which lies before him. He is enabled then to let his light so shine before men that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father who is in heaven. Individual regeneration is therefore the very central work of genuine Christian charity; and all other works which we perform take their complexion and their character from it.

A man's next neighbour is his own household. Natural affection is generally sufficiently powerful to lead men to do good to their own. Natural as well as spiritual affection is from God, and is implanted in our hearts for wise purposes. It is always a sign of a corrupt nature where it is deficient. To be without natural affection is to be lower than the animals. But into that natural affection it is necessary to receive spiritual love, that a man may be at the same time a

natural and spiritual parent, friend, and benefactor. The domestic circle is the sphere where, being at liberty, we may best learn to know ourselves, and acquire the practice of unfeigned charity, by the habitual cultivation of voluntary self-denial and all the moral virtues. Beyond this circle genuine charity will extend its activities to mankind, in their various relations of fellow-citizens, countrymen, and members of the human family. And it is the business of every Christian to take his share in the various works of duty and benevolence, which are necessary for the support of the social fabric, and the amelioration of the state and condition of men.

There is, however, another distinction to be attended to in the relationship of neighbour, which gives rise to two distinct spheres of operative charity for the benefit of those we are commanded to love.

We are to view our neighbour under a natural and under a spiritual relationship. Our country is our neighbour naturally; the church is our neighbour spiritually. Our country is our political mother, from whom we receive support and protection for the body; the church is our spiritual mother, to whom we are indebted for the means of religious instruction, and of preparing the soul for heaven. Each is entitled to its share of our love and service; but the church, as performing the highest use, is entitled to our highest regard.

The love of country, like the love of kindred, is a natural affection, which is in itself good and useful, though, like other natural affections, liable to abuse.

True love of country cannot be inconsistent with the love of kindred on the one hand, nor with the love of the human race on the other. Our country is to be loved as a means of protection, but not of aggression; as a means also for promoting the general good of its inhabitants, not for personal or family aggrandizement. We should love our country with a due regard for the welfare of other nations, and as a branch of what Providence intends as one universal family.

But as we have already spoken more particularly of our natural duties, we will now consider our spiritual duties—those which we owe to the church, and consequently the service we can do to the souls of men.

Our charity as directed to the church must, as when directed to the world, proceed from the centre towards the circumference, or from the particular to the general. Our own spiritual social circle is to be the sphere of our first activities; and until we have performed our duties here, we are not qualified to discharge them in a more enlarged sphere. We must not, however, make this a reason for limiting the sphere of our usefulness. It is only necessary to attend to our particular duties in the first place, where our activity and influence are more needed and most felt. In doing this we are only acting in accordance with the design of Providence, which has so wisely placed us in circumstances in which our highest duty is most within our reach. When we do this, we are not only performing that use which is most conducive to the particular improvement and welfare of that portion

of the church which is nearest to us, but we are indirectly doing what is best for, as contributing to, the welfare of the whole. It should be a leading object with every one, to attend to the duties which are required of him as a member of his own society. The character and utility of the church are but the aggregate of those of its parts—its members and its societies. Next to our individual state and character, the state and character of our society should be our principal care. We should see that it be an efficient instrument for effecting the uses for the sake of which it exists. I shall therefore state briefly what I consider the constitution of a true Christian society should be, with some of its uses, and the duties of its members.

A society should be a church on a smaller scale. It should therefore be like the human body, where all the parts, united in just order, are animated by one life, and co-operate to promote one end. That one life is love or charity—that one end is the salvation of souls.

That a society may be truly one, there must be in it what may be called a community of goods, spiritual and temporal. By a community of spiritual goods I mean such a general social intercourse amongst the members of the body as will bring them into actual communication with each other, so that the knowledge and experience of each may be imparted as far as possible to all, and that a general tone of sentiment and feeling may grow up amongst and pervade the whole. This can hardly be effected to its full extent by our public assemblies for worship only. We require, besides, the nearer communion of personal intercourse;



and where the desire is strong, that will be sought and enjoyed. Such intercommunion has been characteristic of the Lord's people in all times and under all dispensations: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." In the New Church this means of gratification and improvement was early and has been generally adopted. And it would certainly seem to indicate a want of relish for spiritual things—of which we possess such abundance—where a New Church society does not unite for mutual improvement and social intercourse.

By a communion of temporal goods I do not mean such a communion as existed in the early days of the primitive Christian church, when every one sold his possessions and brought the money to the apostles, and they had all things in common. It is not necessary that this branch of charity should take the particular form it assumed in the days of the apostles. But although the primitive form may be abandoned, we must not imagine that we are equally at liberty to abandon the primitive principle. The Christian church is that of a brotherhood: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." But what is a brotherhood, existing under the headship of him who gave himself for us, and who ministered as a servant to his servants, if there is no sympathy for the temporal distresses, and no provision for the temporal wants, of those who are recognized as its members?

It is only necessary that the members of a society should be willing to minister to the temporal necessities of their brethren in such a way as not to encour-

age indolence or improvidence. There may be cases in which sickness and age, orphanage and widowhood, require the helping hand of Christian benevolence. The apostle has well described the condition of a true Christian society, by the whole body suffering or rejoicing with its individual members. This can only be the case when there is mutual knowledge and mutual sympathy. It is not necessary that every member should know the particular state and circumstances of every other member; but there should be in every society such a provision, and such an arrangement for its administration, that every member might sit down at his table with the comfortable assurance that no one considered worthy to be called a brother was famishing for the bread of temporal life, and that every one might lay his head on his pillow with the soothing reflection that his poorest brother had whereon to lay *his* head. All this could be accomplished with little trouble and at little expense. It is not always requisite that a society should do it; but it is their duty to see that it is done, or not left undone.

In this branch of their duties the members of the New Church are perhaps in some peculiar danger of falling short, from a misunderstanding or misapplication of their own principles. Because charity consists essentially in doing spiritual service to the neighbour, they may fall into the error of supposing that temporal benefits are not required of them by the laws of spiritual charity, or are of very subordinate importance. But, besides the temporal benefit conferred, the moral influence of the act is calculated to make it of more

than temporal or temporary utility. The least act of charity which we sincerely perform seldom fails to make some good impression on the hearts of others, and always has some beneficial influence on our own.

It is no doubt true that charity directed to the spiritual wants or welfare of others, is still more important than that which regards their temporal necessities. The soul is far more precious than the body. Both are to be cared for, on the principle of a sound mind in a sound body; but the soul is the primary object of Christian regard.

Considering that we are the privileged members of the Christian church, which is the great instrument by which peace on earth is to be established, and that the mark by which all men are to know that we are the disciples of Christ is, that we love one another, be it our constant aim and daily labour to carry out in our lives the great principles of this pure and undefiled religion. Then may we hope that we are doing what we can to make the Lord's church a praise and a blessing in the earth.

## SERMON XIII.

EVIL OVERCOME BY GOD'S OPERATION AND  
MAN'S CO-OPERATION.

“Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows: and he took unto him bow and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow: and he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said, Open the window eastward: and he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot: and he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.”—2 KINGS xiii. 14-17.

It was a custom in ancient times for persons and nations to express their meaning, more particularly on important matters, and especially in relation to war, by symbols as well as words. When the dying prophet, mourning over the inroads which the enemies of his God and his people had made into the Holy Land, commanded his royal visitor to perform those warlike ceremonies of which he well understood the purport, it was to impress him, more deeply than he could do by

the most earnest and impassioned language alone, with a sense of the solemn duty which devolved upon him, as the official vindicator of Israel, to drive back the Syrian invaders. But this sort of hieroglyphic language had its origin in remoter and more spiritual times, when symbolism or correspondence was a science; a time when the now long-lost book of Jashur delivered its symbolic institutes, in accordance with which David "bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow."

But, although the children of Israel and Judah used this symbolism to express natural ideas, that which finds a place in the divine Word contains a higher meaning. The Israelitish dispensation being representative, and the Word divinely inspired, whatever took place in the one, that is recorded in the other, contains a spiritual sense, intended to instruct the Christian in the duties of the religious life. This portion of the Word, therefore, teaches a spiritual lesson, from the study of which we may find the means of practical improvement.

Israel representing the church militant, a particular class of her enemies are represented by the Syrians. As enemies of the church, the Syrians represent those who possess the knowledge of what is good, but who use it for an evil purpose; like those who act upon the good of others to compass their own selfish ends, and who thus make good subservient to evil.

It is not intended to consider this subject as it relates to the church as a body, although this is neither an unnecessary nor an unprofitable view of the

subject. The enemies of the church are not, however, limited to those without, who are hostile to her principles and interests. The foes the church has most to dread are those of her own household. Those who pervert her principles by using them for selfish ends, or who know her heavenly truths, but live contrary to them, are more dangerous enemies of the church than her outward adversaries. But the church as a body may be her own enemy, by holding her own principles loosely, or not guarding with sufficient care against their theoretical and practical corruption.

But, since the character of the church as a body is but the aggregate of that of her individual members, it is more profitable to consider the subject in its personal application; for here we find the root of the evil; and we need only look narrowly into ourselves to see, that the evils of which we sometimes complain in the general body, have partly their origin nearer to ourselves than we may have been led to suppose.

Let every one, therefore, who is willing to engage in this warfare against the evils of his own heart, place himself in the situation of the King of Israel. In times of trial and danger the Christian must, like Joash, seek counsel at the mouth of the Lord as the Prophet. Acknowledging him to be his "Father," as the author of the truth, the reception of which makes him his son; and seeing in him "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," as the doctrine and intelligence by which there is protection from what is false and evil, and shedding over him the tears of godly sorrow, he must crave, and be ready to receive from him, the

help which is to be found in no other. And if he earnestly desires that help, he will draw from the counsel which the man of God gave to the Israelitish king, a knowledge of the means of his own deliverance.

The series of signs in which the prophet delivered his counsel to Joash, will be found equally significant and far more important to the Christian disciple than they were to the Israelitish king. Let us attend to the first requirement,—

“And he said unto him, Take bow and arrows.”

The acquisition of means is the first step to the attainment of an end. The spiritual, like the carnal combatant, must acquire the weapons of war before he can engage in conflict. The weapons, like the warfare of the Christian, are not carnal but spiritual; and the Word of God is the armoury wherein he obtains them. The Word contains the whole armour of God, which enables him who puts it on to stand in the evil day. From the Word, therefore, the Christian must take the weapons by which he is to overcome his spiritual enemies. And what are the weapons symbolized by those which the prophet commanded the king to take?

Amongst the various things which the Hebrews figuratively expressed by arrows were sharp words. “The wicked bend their bow to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.” And, spiritually, bitter words are false principles proceeding from evil. “But God will shoot at them with an arrow, and suddenly shall they be wounded.” And the arrows with which God wounds

the wicked are the truths of his own divine Word, by which false principles are invalidated, and deprived of the power to injure or destroy what is good and true. These are "the arrows that are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies."

But the king was commanded to take a bow as well as arrows. As the Hebrews compared words to arrows, they compared the tongue that gave utterance to them to a bow. "The wicked bend their tongue like their bow for lies." Arrows, like words, when uttered by the righteous, are the symbols of truths; and a bow, like the tongue, is the symbol of doctrine. Doctrine has the same relation, correspondently, to truth that the tongue has to words, or that a bow has to an arrow, or a sling to a stone; all which are employed in this symbolic sense in Scripture. Doctrine is a general truth, deduced as a conclusion from many particular truths. It forms them into different divisions, subordinates them to different heads, and arranges and disposes them so as to make their particular and combined activities tend to one result. Of such importance is doctrine.

Yet there are some persons who cannot see the importance, nor even the utility, of doctrine, but who regard all system in religion as a dangerous attempt to bend divine truth into compliance with human opinion. Doctrine has no doubt shown itself to be a dangerous weapon in unskilful hands. But doctrine is only dangerous when it is false. False doctrine perverts and misapplies the truths of the divine Word: it is the deceitful bow that turns aside in the day of battle.



But so much as the false is mischievous, so much is the true useful. Our choice lies between the false and the true; not between the false and none. Any one who rejects all others' systems must form one for himself. The Word cannot be intelligently understood without doctrine; and doctrine must be drawn from the Word by an enlightened teacher, who is able to distinguish between its apparent and genuine truths, and who can draw from the letter principles in harmony with its indwelling spirit. This does not, however, hinder the individual Christian from using his own powers of discernment and discrimination. Doctrine is intended to help individual judgment; not to supersede it. It is an instrument of which the mind is the power; not a power of which the mind is the instrument. The power which the mind may exert by means of right doctrine is described in the expressive symbolism of the Apocalypse, by Him who sat on the white horse with a bow in his hand, going forth conquering and to conquer. He who has a right understanding of the Word, which is the white horse, and has sound doctrine, which is the bow, is able, in all conflicts with evil and falsity, whether in the outer world or in his own mind, continually to overcome.

Significant and important, then, is the command, "Take bow and arrows." When, in times of trial and of danger, we seek counsel at the mouth of the Lord through his prophets and evangelists, we must not hope to receive a direct divine interposition in our favour. Nothing is more evident from the Word itself than that we must prepare for the conflicts of life by

acquiring the means by which we can alone be able successfully to meet them. How did the Lord meet and repel the enemy in his temptations? Was it not by the truths and in the very language of his own written Word? These were his bow and arrows in the day of his mighty conflict. And if he, in his conflicts, employed these weapons, how much more must we require to use them. Christians are not, perhaps, sufficiently impressed with a sense of the duty and importance of cultivating a knowledge of the truths of the Word—not by mere unreflecting reading, but by the aid of those heavenly doctrines which enable us to discriminate and apply its sacred truths. Thus prepared, we have the means, at least, of meeting temptation when it comes.

But, important as this preparation is, something more is required of us than the acquisition of means. We must be disposed and qualified to use them. After the king had taken bow and arrows, the prophet gave him another command. He said unto him, "Lay thy hand upon the bow." The hand is the symbol of power. To lay the hand upon the bow is to apply the powers of the mind to the doctrines and truths of the divine Word. God has given us mental as well as bodily powers, and he requires us to use them. He has conferred upon us the two great gifts of free-will and reason. He has placed before us, in his inspired Word, the divine truths that teach us the way of salvation, and he requires us to use them. For, what are those truths to us, even when we know them, unless we employ

our powers to use them? This command is not only an important but a necessary one. We are naturally disposed to rest in knowledge and belief, even in a matter so all important as salvation and eternal life. Some, indeed, there are who think that nothing more than faith is necessary to salvation, and that we have no power which we can exert in spiritual things, but can only act as we are moved by irresistible grace. The intellectual rejection of such errors does not, however, of itself secure us against their results. All error has a moral origin. Although it has its cause in the intellect, it has its end in the will. It is the presence of this end in the will that leads to the practical error of trusting for deliverance and salvation to the knowledge and belief, without the practice, of the truth. The disinclination we feel to right and vigorous action, which sometimes accompanies the possession of the truth and the profession of the Christian religion, has its root in the unconquered evils of the heart. Truths are but the means of salvation: their value is in their use; and how can they be used but by applying to them the powers of the mind? It is not enough, therefore, to take bow and arrows; we must lay our hand upon the bow. We must apply to the means the power which God has given us, or we can have no reasonable expectation of overcoming in war or enjoying security in peace. The archer who would have his bow unstrung in *the* day of battle, and yet hope for victory, would not be more unreasonable than the Christian who practically lays all human power and agency aside,

and yet presumes to hope for glory. It is a delusive hope; it has no sanction in Scripture, and both dishonours God—while professing to honour him—and ruins the soul by an indolent trust in omnipotence. By laying human ability aside we give advantage to our spiritual enemies, lay ourselves open to their assaults, and allow them to spoil us without offering them resistance. Let every one, therefore, who would hope for success in the warfare of the spiritual life, lay his hand upon the bow; let him apply the whole power of his mind to the means of salvation, and those means will be of the utmost avail.

But it may be asked: Is human power sufficient to effect the soul's deliverance? can man, by his own agency, raise himself to glory? We answer, no; human power is necessary, but it is not sufficient. There is a power besides and above that of man, which must enter into it before it can operate with success; and that power belongs to God. Elisha commanded the king to put his hand upon the bow; but this was not all that was done; for it is immediately added, "And Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands." The hands of Elisha are the symbols of divine power; and the laying on of his hands symbolized the communication of that power. Thus are the hands strengthened by divine power for the conflict and for victory. Without this power, human exertion would prove fruitless; with it, it is irresistible. "I can do all things by Christ strengthening me." The Lord fights for us, but he does it by our instrumentality. It is by the Lord's

power that we overcome and are saved; but his power acts through ours; it flows into our faculties and our acquirements, and comes into action through our co-operation. Indeed, our action is only the reciprocation of God's action; the very power by which we co-operate with God being entirely from him. Yet that power must be used as our own. Could the action and operation of God save men, all men would be saved. God wills that all men should be saved. Why, then, are any lost? Because man must will and strive for salvation, before God can give or he receive it. God does not operate independently of man's will, but by means of it: he does not lay human agency aside, but aids and directs it in its operations. Elisha did not take the bow out of the hand of Joash and bend it himself, and allow the king to stand by an idle spectator. He called the powers of the king into action; but into those powers he infused a power that was greater, and then commanded him to exert it. So is it spiritually with every man. The powers of the mind are free, and every one is called to bring them into action; but none are left to lean upon those powers alone. Into them the Almighty enters with his own, and leaves its human recipients to become its active agents. As the freedom to use the communicated power rests with man, it depends entirely on himself whether it shall be effective for his salvation or not. The divine power is always present, and is never for a moment withheld from any one; yet that power, though it is omnipotent, never forces, so as in the least degree to

overbear, the freedom of the human will, but leaves the human agent free to choose and to act. It is only by the human will being determined to action that the divine power in him can become active. It is only by zeal and diligence on the part of the human agent that the divine agency can work effectually in him.

While, on the one hand, it is an error to rest inactive in spiritual things, it is no less an error, on the other, to think that when we effect anything by active exertion, we effect it by our own power. "By my own arm I have gotten me the victory," is a suggestion that sometimes arises in the heart. There is in every mind an inherent tendency to claim the merit due to virtuous action, and ascribe to man's own power that which never could have been accomplished but by the power of God. How is this tendency to be overcome? how is this false ascription to be corrected? By obeying another command of the prophet to the king. When Elisha had laid his hands upon the king's hands, he said unto him, "Open the window eastward." The window of a house, like the eye of the body, is analogous to the understanding, which is the eye of the mind. The east is the place of the rising sun, and the sun is an emblem of the Lord as the Sun of Righteousness. To open the window eastward is to open the understanding to the Lord as the source of the light of spiritual life, that power may be guided by wisdom.

But there is a still more exalted idea spiritually contained in this particular act. In the Word a win-

dow is sometimes expressive of an interior faculty through which the mind has immediate communication with the Lord and heaven. An instance of this occurs in the book of Malachi. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." We bring tithes into the storehouse when we treasure up in our minds the principles of goodness and truth derived from the Lord, and acknowledge them to be the Lord's, and devote them to his service; and when the external man is thus enriched with truth and goodness from the Word, and subordinated to divine authority, the Lord opens the internal man, and through it pours into the mind the blessings of spiritual love and light, producing fruitfulness and everlasting joy. The opening of the window eastward is the opening of the internal man, by which the mind becomes receptive of an immediate influx of love and light from the Lord; for the previous acts have more relation to the instruction of the external man. The east, towards which the window was opened, is an emblem of a high or interior state of love to the Lord, and of inward peace and confidence. The east, where the sun rises in his splendour, and sheds his first gladdening and beautifying rays on the landscape, sleeping in tranquil beauty and bathed in refreshing dews, is an emblem of the celestial state of the inner life, where God is ever rising, "a morning without clouds." And such a state of inward

peace is not inconsistent with a state of outward warfare. The Lord, when he bestowed on his disciples the gift of peace—his own blessed peace—warned them at the same time that in this world they should have tribulation. Were it not for this inward peace, the Christian could not support the weight of trial and conflict which sometimes is his portion in this life. This peace enables him to possess his soul in patience, and to war with the love, and for the sake, of peace as an end. This opening of the interiors of the mind to the Lord as the love and light of the soul, brings down the influence of these divine principles into the lower faculties of the mind, and sanctifies the efforts that are made there to resist and overcome evil, and finally establishes the peaceful reign of the Christian virtues in the life. The taking bow and arrows, the laying on of the prophet's hands, and the opening of the window eastward, imply that the means, the powers, and the ends of life are from the Lord.

When the window is thus spiritually opened eastward, the spiritual man is prepared to carry out the final command which the prophet gave to the king, when he said, "Shoot." The effect, simple as it may be, is the end for the sake of which all the previous preparation was made, and it includes in itself as a result all the acquirements and powers that have been employed to produce it. Every work we perform comprehends in it the whole mind—the will and understanding, and the principles of goodness and truth which they possess. The mind is as much in every act we perform as a tree is in the fruit, with



its enclosed seed, which it produces. The tree contains the seed, and can be produced from it again. Yet the tree cannot produce a single seed till it has gone through all the successive stages of its growth, by which it acquired the power of reproduction. No more can the Christian do a really living work, one that has the power of endurance and renewal, but by performing all the duties of the spiritual life, and passing through all the stages of spiritual growth. A series of acts is required in any important work before a final result can be obtained. In preparing ourselves or others for the business and uses of life, we bestow much labour and patience on the means of arriving at the end proposed. Long and sedulously do we labour to rear the human being from a helpless infancy to a useful manhood; every profession demanding special and systematic preparation. It is the same in spiritual as in natural life. In the present case this progressive preparation consists in acquiring the means, applying to them the powers of the mind, admitting into these a power still higher, and having the interiors of the mind opened to the reception of the love and light of the Lord. Thus, when a way is opened from the natural to the spiritual mind, and from the world to heaven, the final act of usefulness takes place. It was therefore when the king had made the necessary preparation that the prophet commanded him to shoot; and when he had performed this act, that the prophet exultingly exclaimed, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou hast consumed

them." Aphek was one of the cities which the Syrians, in their wars, had wrested from Jehoahaz, and of which they still held possession. It was to repossess himself of these lost cities that Elisha encouraged Joash to engage in war with Syria.

The regenerate are circumstanced like Israel in Canaan. However the principles of goodness and truth, or of charity and faith, may be established in their minds, the evils of their nature are never utterly destroyed, but are only removed outwards, or kept in subjection, as were the nations of Canaan. And the evils when once renounced, are in the continual effort to regain their lost position and dominion. It requires watchfulness to prevent, and labour to repel, their hostile invasions.

Let our purpose be steady and our hand strong, and let our heart and mind and life be brought under the influences and direction of the Lord, and success will reward our exertions to overcome evil.

## SERMON XIV.

### THE EVIL OF UNIVERSAL APPROBATION.

“Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.”—LUKE vi. 26.

THE wisdom and the ways of God are so different from those of men, that the two must often come into conflict with each other. This arises mainly from the circumstance, that in all he does God has an eternal end in view, while man's ends are only temporal. Where the ends are different or opposite, so also are the tendencies and operations. The lessons of divine wisdom must therefore in many cases be widely different from the maxims of human prudence. To the natural man much of the Lord's teaching must consequently appear contrary to the dictates of reason, and inconsistent with proper views of human life and happiness. What could appear more unreasonable in itself, or more inconsistent with men's natural ideas of happiness and unhappiness, than the declarations of our Lord in connection with the present text? “Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of heaven.

Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Blessed are ye that hunger: for ye shall be filled. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold your reward is great in heaven. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

It is true that in all these sayings there is a deep spiritual meaning. The poor who are blessed are the poor in spirit. The hungry who are to be filled are those who hunger after righteousness. Those whose weeping shall be turned into laughter are such as shed the tears of penitence. The persecuted are they who undergo spiritual temptation, and experience its blessed effects in purification and peace. And they of whom all men speak well are such as know nothing of inward spiritual trial, and who therefore know nothing of inward purification, nor of the peace which is the reward of victory.

But although these divine declarations have a spiritual meaning, the literal sense is not to be entirely set aside. Though not all true absolutely, they are generally true conditionally, as appears from the Lord's own words on another occasion. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter

into the kingdom of God!" When the disciples were astonished at his words, Jesus answered, "Children, how hard is it for them that *trust* in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark x. 23.) In this number are included those who place their heart on perishable possessions, whether they consist in material wealth, or in the accumulated knowledge of sacred things, neither of which have any blessing but in their sanctified use. The words of the Lord which pronounce a woe upon those of whom all men speak well, may justly be regarded as being true literally as well as spiritually. In a world into which evil has entered, and in which it has taken deep root, and where congenial errors, whose office it is to conceal or defend evil, have necessarily sprung up, it is impossible to secure the favourable opinion of all men, without very flexible principles, temporizing opinions, and equivocal conduct. On the other hand, it is hardly possible for men firmly to maintain and consistently to act upon right principles, without incurring some share of opprobrium or encountering some degree of opposition. There is hardly any feeling more powerful or more prevalent among men than the desire of possessing the favourable opinion of their fellow-beings. Where there is no higher principle of action, it is well that the opinion of the world exercises so great and so beneficial an influence. The fear of its censure prevents many evil actions, and the love of its approbation produces much useful activity. The opinion of the world has therefore its use. It is useful to those

who are below its standard. It raises them out of the state of apathy or degradation to which they are prone, and from which they have no inherent desire to raise themselves. But the opinion of the world has also its abuse and its danger. It has a tendency to repress as well as to elevate: to draw down to its own level even those whose principles point to a higher standard and tend to a purer practice. Those who would secure the good opinion of the world must make it their chief study to please it. They must speak and act so as not to offend against its passions and prejudices, if not to favour and flatter them. The world's greatest benefactors have often experienced its bitterest hostility. This experience has not been limited to those only who have opposed popular opinion on moral or religious subjects, but by many who have ventured to differ from or contradict it on subjects purely physical. Those who discovered or demonstrated the revolution of the planets and the circulation of the blood were fiercely opposed, not merely by the ignorant and superstitious, but by those who had the advantages of a liberal or professional education. If such minds could have been deterred from their high purposes and useful pursuits by the fear of contemporary censure, or the love of applause, the world might still have been ignorant of truths which have shed so much light on science, and made the names of their discoverers illustrious. Those, therefore, who yield to the blind or capricious influence of the world, when their own views of utility or principles of right are opposed, not only do injury to

themselves, but to those whose censure they fear, or whose approbation they covet. If hostility is to be expected against new truths of science, much more is it to be looked for in morals and religion. These are subjects which come home more to men's business and bosoms, and on which their passions and prejudices are still stronger and more easily excited. Hence we find that those who have been most faithful in giving their testimony against the false persuasions and evil practices of the world, even of the religious world, have been treated with the greatest contumely and subjected to the severest persecution. The prophets who, in obedience to their high commission, boldly and faithfully reprov'd the sinfulness of the people, and warn'd them of its consequences, were hated and reproach'd, and many of them destroyed: so that Stephen, when addressing his countrymen in his own defence, said, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" His was at once the conduct and the fate of a true prophet. Boldly testifying to the truth of the new religion, expressed by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and fearlessly warning them of their danger by the example of their fathers, who had relentlessly persecuted the true prophets, the whole multitude, stopping their ears and gnashing their teeth, rushed upon him, and made him the first martyr to the Christian faith. The false prophets, on the contrary, were those of whom all men spake well. They taught and prophesied, not what the Lord commanded and the states of men required, but what the people loved to hear. The Lord says by Jeremiah

(v. 31), "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so." It was by studying what the people loved, and by favouring their loves, that the false prophets obtained popular favour, and the reciprocation of selfish affection. Their character and manners are described by the same prophet (viii. 11), "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." This tenderness to the evils and disorders of mankind is precisely that kind of forbearance which conciliates the natural minded, and procures for their moral and spiritual advisers the character of benefactors, without the odium of being reprovers and reformers. The principle has given rise in every age to some general mode of reconciling the common conscience to the state of impurity sanctioned by the times, and has ever laid an unction to the soul, to palliate its corruptions and lull its sense of danger. Under the Israelitish dispensation it turned the sacrifices into venal means of propitiating the Deity, and purchasing pardon—a use for which they were never intended—a sense which they never were designed to bear. Yet this idea of the meaning and use of sacrifice has been adopted from the Jewish into the Christian church: where the sacrifice of the Lord is regarded as an offering made to God, to propitiate his favour, and induce him to look with mercy upon sinful men. And now also the hurt of the daughter of the Lord's people is cured slightly. The people are taught to believe that the manifold corruptions of the heart can



be removed by an act of penance or of faith, and thus is peace whispered to the souls of men, from which no evil may have been removed by actual repentance, no one sin rooted out from the heart by self-denial. It is by such accommodations to the inclinations of the natural man, resulting in perversions of the principles of the Word of God, that favour is obtained for that which professes to cancel the guilt, but does not necessarily remove the evil of sin.

If we look to our Lord as the great teacher, and the example to all Christian instructors, we find no such superficial means of purification and pardon offered to his hearers, and to the sinful and suffering children of men in after-times. His tenderness is indeed conspicuous; but it is a tenderness that openly declares, while it deeply commiserates, the sinful state and lost condition of his creatures. He does not offer to deliver them from their corruptions either by relaxing the authority or removing the penalty of the law. He teaches them that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them; that one jot or one tittle should in nowise pass from the law till all was fulfilled; and that unless their righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they would in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. And even when required to say what was to be done to inherit eternal life, his answer was, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." While the matter of the Lord's teaching was thus directly opposed to the temporizing teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, his manner, though full of love and benign-

nity to the simple and sincere, was severe and pointed to the impenitent and hypocritical. No wonder then that he was regarded with even more hatred than his own prophets,—that he was despised and rejected of men, cast out of the vineyard, and killed.

Never were love and wisdom so perfectly exemplified as in the life and teaching of our Lord. But never so much as in his case was the sentiment falsified, that the native loveliness of innocence and virtue is so attractive that it must command universal admiration. It would appear from the teaching, as it does from the experience of our Lord, that this human conclusion, like so many others, is nearly the opposite of the truth. He speaks of himself as necessarily incurring the displeasure of the world, for acting the part of the true prophet in exposing and condemning the corruptions of men. When his unbelieving brethren desired him to go up to Judea and show himself to the world, he said, "My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify against it that the deeds thereof are evil." He also said to his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The Lord delivered the truths which the state of the world required. He accommodated his teaching, but did not compromise his principles. He taught men the truth in parables, and in such other forms as they were able to bear; but he taught them the truth in its simplicity and its power.

The apostles imitated the Lord's example. After the Lord had ascended into heaven they boldly and faithfully preached the doctrines of Christianity, new, strange, and unpopular as they were, especially those concerning the person of the Lord himself, his resurrection from the dead, and salvation by him as the Saviour of the world. The apostles were not of the number of those who love the praise of men more than the praise of God. They knew that in the existing state of the world it was impossible for them to preach the Gospel faithfully without incurring both hatred and persecution, without having their names cast out as evil, and having evil spoken of them falsely for the Son of man's sake.

Like true prophets, they testified against the evils and errors of their age, and fearlessly taught the way of truth and righteousness. And although they were opposed by the men of the world, they were successful with many of the serious and simple. Those who were brought by their means to the knowledge of the Lord, and who formed the early Christian church, acted on the same noble principle, heedless of the contempt and contumely which were heaped upon them by the worldly and self-righteous, as appears from the testimony of one who said, "As for this sect, we know that it is everywhere spoken against."

The times in which we live recall those early days of Christianity, and the circumstances in which we ourselves are privileged to stand render the conduct of the early Christians peculiarly interesting to us. As members of the New Church which the Lord in his

providence has begun to establish in the world, we must expect to experience something of that contempt and hostility which the high claims and startling novelty of our religious views cannot fail to provoke, and which, for a like cause, the early members of the first Christian church had to encounter. And woe to us also if we so trim our pure but unpopular principles, or so accommodate our teaching or our practice, to the errors and evils of the world, that all men shall speak well of us. We should not, indeed, by imprudent zeal, controversial wrangling, or uncharitable opposition, give occasion for unnecessary offence; but neither must we by temporizing seek to conciliate the favour of the world at the expense of the truth. We should neither despise nor court the good opinion of the world, but in all things seek to please the Lord, and satisfy the demands of a good conscience. Then may we say that even though all men speak ill of us, we are acting in such a way as to advance the best interests of our neighbour, and the glory of God, and the welfare of our own souls. In our day, or at least in our country, we are happily free from all apprehensions of that form of persecution to which the Hebrew prophets and the early Christian teachers were subject. But the temptation to temporize, in order to conciliate the good opinion of the world, is perhaps more insidious now than in their times. We have no fear of violent death, nor even of bodily injury; but there are other fears that exercise great influence over us. Position, wealth, personal consideration, are dear to us as members of society, and we naturally incline

to do, and to avoid doing much in order to secure them. There is great need for us to think upon the Lord's words,—“ He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father who is in heaven ; but he that denieth me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.” There is an open and consistent profession that is conducive to a healthful condition of mind and development of principles. On the other hand, secrecy and fear have a tendency to stunt the growth of the mind, and render our principles feeble and languishing. It is true that our profession may be ostentatious or obtrusive, and be the means of creating an unjust prejudice against our principles. It is best to avoid extremes ; neither to deny the Lord, like Peter, nor proclaim him, like the restored. It is not so much a matter of calculation as of conscience. When conscience rules our conduct, it is not the fear but the love of men that constrains us ; and when our conduct is the result of love to others, it tends to benefit, though it may fail to please. Yet will right conduct secure the approval of the really good, whose approval alone it is useful to desire. The faithful and upright may be sure to find support and encouragement in each other. This it is not unlawful to desire and strive to obtain. It is the desire to be well spoken of by all men that is the snare, and the attainment of which is certain to bring a woe upon us.

Let us only keep steadfastly in view the principle of being faithful to God and just to men, and we may hope that the curse of selfishness will be escaped, and the blessing of disinterestedness secured.

## SERMON XV.

## BEARING THE CROSS.

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”—LUKE xiv. 26, 27.

THERE were two great duties, the necessity of which the Lord impressed upon his disciples—the duty of denying themselves and of loving the brethren. “If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me.” “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

These duties are intimately connected with each other. We can only love others as we cease to love ourselves. Self-love leaves no room in the heart for any other objects than self, or for such as are connected with self. To lay the axe to the root of this tree, which brings forth spontaneously and abundantly the corrupt fruit which produces misery, is one of the great ends of religion. This forms one of its peculiar and distinguishing excellencies. It not only promotes virtue, but, what is of still greater consequence, it

makes virtue truly virtuous. It eradicates from the mind those impure motives which enter into our best deeds, and contaminate them with unworthy ends. Virtue, without self-denial, is the virtue of selfishness or of expediency. It only covers, it does not remove, the corruptions of the heart and mind. Even where there is some earnest desire to be virtuous, but not sufficient attention to the duty of self-denial, little progress can be made in pure and undefiled religion. The hereditary nature of every one is nothing but evil; and the new nature cannot be formed except so far as the first dies out. It might seem that the surest way to remove evil is to do good; but the surest way to do good is to remove evil. To become holy, we must first become harmless. If we cease to do evil, we shall come to do good; but it does not follow that if we do good we shall cease to do evil. By simply doing good, evil may cease to appear, but it does not therefore cease to exist and to rule. It only retires into the interior recesses of the mind, and becomes more fugitive. The first duty of the Christian, therefore, is to put away evil, the second is to do good. Attention to this order of our Christian duties is of the greater importance, because there is a natural tendency in all minds to judge by that which appears, without looking searchingly into the state of the interior, which determines the real quality both of our charity and our piety. The performance of such outward acts, without the denial of inward evil, is to offer the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul, which can neither be acceptable to God nor profitable to man.

The very first demand which the herald of Christianity made upon men was, to bring forth fruit meet for repentance; and the means by which this is to be effected was the eradication of evil: "And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." No fruit, however apparently good, can be accepted while the cause of offence remains. The evil which produces the sin must be eradicated before the good that produces righteousness can be implanted in its stead. This is a work not to be effected in a moment, nor by an act of faith. It is the work of time, of patient labour, and of perseverance. We must take up our cross daily, and follow the Lord. We must look to him as our instructor, our guide, our pattern, and be still more anxious to be blameless than to be praiseworthy. Then may we hope to crucify the lusts of the flesh, and the love of self and of the world, and to receive beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

The Lord taught this most important duty on many occasions and in various forms; in none, perhaps, more likely to impress us with a deep sense of the nature and magnitude of the sacrifice which we, as Christians, are required to make than in the present text.

We cannot suppose that the Lord, when he required every disciple to hate the entire circle of his household, intended his language to be understood literally, or his demand to be literally complied with. He who commands us to love our enemies, cannot require us to



hate our relations and friends. He who tells us to return curses with blessings, hatred with kindness, and persecution with prayers, cannot require us to hate the loving and forsake the helpless. He who sent his messenger before his face to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest his presence should smite the earth with a curse, could not himself be the first to sow discord between them.

But it is not enough to be convinced that our Lord did not intend to lead us to do what would be a great natural evil. We must believe that he intended to lead us to the attainment of a great spiritual good. This is one of the instances in which we can see that the letter killeth; and it is one also in which, I trust, we shall be able to see that the spirit giveth life. His words contain a purely spiritual sense, which alone affords the means of edification. It is, indeed, assumed that the Lord did not teach his disciples to hate their relations according to the flesh, but only not to love them more than him, as he, on another occasion, expresses it. But there is a reason and a meaning in every form of expression which infinite wisdom employs.

We have frequently had occasion to remark, that in the purely spiritual sense persons mean principles, and that every part of the Word is to be realized in one individual mind. In the Word the human mind is compared to a house, and the various affections and thoughts that belong to it are compared to a household. There is a real correspondence between them.

All things that belong to the mind, both of affection and thought, are connected with each other as if by relationship; for they are so arranged as mutually to respect each other like the members of a family, or the families of one house, in consequence of which they are reproduced according to their affinities. The members of these families are good or evil, true or false, according as the master of the house is or is not a regenerate man. When the Lord said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," he meant to teach us that a man's spiritual enemies are the lusts and imaginations of his own heart. The enmity and discord in the unregenerate mind is described by the Lord in agreement with this analogy,—“The brother shall deliver the brother to death, and the father the son, and children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.” This is the state and condition of every fallen, unregenerate man. It was in reference to this condition of the human mind that the Lord declared he came to set a man at variance with his friends, as when he says,—“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I am come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.” Who does not see that the blessed Saviour, who is the **PRINCE OF PEACE**, did not come for the purpose of creating discord and war? He came, indeed, to create war, and to send a sword; but they were such as the apostle speaks of when he

says, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the bringing down of strongholds:) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." These are the war and the sword which our Lord came to send upon earth. It was the war of truth against error, and of good against evil—the sword of the Spirit against the lusts of the flesh: a war whose object is to bring the rebellious thoughts and feelings of our hearts under the mild and benignant rule of his love and truth.

As the Lord came to create such a war as this in man's spiritual household, so does he require him to hate all who belong to it: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

The father and mother of our spiritual house are the evils which we inherit from our parents, the loves of self and the world, which are the hereditary root of all the evils of our corrupt selfhood. The wife is the ruling evil love of the will, which the mind has freely chosen as its own, and with which the ruling false persuasion of the understanding has entered into a union which really has the nature of a marriage. The children of this marriage are the evil affections and thoughts that spring from the combined activity of the ruling principles of the mind. The brothers and sisters are, on the other hand, the thoughts and

affections derived more directly from the hereditary nature. These, then, are the father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, we are required to hate. They are the selfish, worldly, carnal feelings and thoughts that make up our unrenewed nature, and that allure and lead us into sin and folly. They make us children of the devil, and aliens from our Father's house. To hate them is therefore a necessary duty, without the performance of which we cannot be the Lord's disciples. Previous to the reception of new life from the Lord, they are the corrupt elements of our very being; and therefore we are required to hate our own life also—a term as comprehensive as it is expressive.

Who that can see the real nature and tendency of these merely natural, and, as such, sensual and worldly affections, but will feel the necessity and the duty of hating and forsaking them? The sacrifice, or rather crucifixion, required of us, is indeed a serious, and must be a trying one. The symbolism of our text is sufficient to convince us of this. It not only requires us to sell all that we have, but to hate and forsake all that is dearest to us. To hate what we have most loved, to forsake what we have most eagerly pursued, can be no less than laying down our very life, or entirely changing the aims and ends which form our very self, our real life, and for the sake of which we have considered life worth possessing. Yet, great as the sacrifice is, it is one that every rational being, who knows he has an immortal soul, should be willing to make.

But while it is a duty and a condition of disciple-

ship, and a means of securing future happiness, it has the promise of a suitable and adequate reward in this life also. For the Lord declares that "there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come life everlasting." This divine declaration gives to those who take up their cross, and follow their Lord in the regeneration, of which the persecution of spiritual temptation is one of the means, the promise not only of simple compensation for what they surrender for his sake, but of increase a hundred-fold. And what is this but the promise of an overflowing measure, not only of everything holy and good, but of satisfaction and happiness as their results? It assures us that for every evil affection we surrender, numerous affections will be received in its place; and that for every evil delight of which we deny ourselves, numerous delights will rise up in their place. Yet this hundred-fold is expressive of quality rather than quantity, and is the promise of fullness, completeness, perfection, both of goodness and joy. For everything heavenly differs in this respect from what is earthly, that it fills the mind with large and noble views of life and immortality, and fills the heart with love to God and man; and gives true and lasting felicity for false and transitory pleasure. Instead of the marriage of evil and falsity, with its family of lusts and

imaginings—pride, envy, discontent, resulting in disorder, division, and discord; we have the heavenly marriage of goodness and truth, with its progeny of holy affections and thoughts—humility, charity, contentment; and its legitimate results in order, unity, and concord.

Who then will not choose and hasten to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, and follow him in the regeneration to his kingdom of righteousness and peace? The war, and the fire, and the sword, which he came to send on earth, and which he still sends, to purge and purify the natural mind, where evil has its abode, are but the permissions of one whose end is peace, but who gives not a false and temporal, but a true and eternal peace. Yet nothing is required to be given up, whose place will not be richly supplied with far better things. Our temporary loss will be our eternal gain. The pains of separation will be succeeded by the joys of a heavenly and happy alliance; our house will be filled with sincere and devoted friends; harmony and peace will reign within, and order and righteousness will be displayed without. The Lord himself will take up his abode in the inmost of the mind, and he will be to us as a father, and we shall be to him as sons and daughters. He will beget and strengthen in us all holy affections and thoughts, and beautify us with salvation, making us not only happy in ourselves, but the means of happiness to others.

Is not such a promise and prospect sufficient to incite us to hate all that is the inheritance and the life

of our fallen nature, in order that we may love what is of the Lord, and what he has provided as an inheritance for every true disciple? Yet how many prefer the poor possessions and enjoyments of earthly and sensual loves to those of heavenly and spiritual affections!

Let it not be so with us. Let us take up our cross daily, by daily crucifying the lusts of the natural mind, that incline us to everything impure and unholy. And if we follow the Lord in his teaching and example, he will lead us into a state of spiritual love, and into everything pure and holy. These will raise us out of the condition of slaves to our appetites and passions, and give us the freedom that comes from a practical knowledge of the truth. Instead of hating those with whom the Lord's own providence has connected us by the ties of relative and conjugal affection, we will cherish them with a more tender love, and perform our duties to them with greater zeal and fidelity. We shall only hate that which is evil and impure, especially the evils of our hearts, the foes which are of our own spiritual household, who would draw us away from the love of the Lord and our neighbour. But shall we hate even these? When we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, hatred itself shall cease. Hatred spiritually means aversion; and spiritual aversion is a real turning away from, and a shunning and forsaking of that which is an object of aversion. This aversion consists in turning the ends and all the activities of life in an opposite direction. Before, their direction was earthly,

and even infernal; now, it is heavenly. The disciple has turned his back upon self and the world, on the ends of life, and objects of life's pursuit. Nor has he only turned his back upon them; but, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching unto those things which are before, he presses toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.

Let us then lift up our hearts to the Lord Jesus, and pray for the deliverance and the blessing for which the psalmist prayed,—“Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.” Deliverance from the power of evil affections, that utter vanity and work falsehood, admits of the good affections growing up in strength and beauty. The removal of evil is the admission of good.

When the marriage of evil and falsity has been broken up, and the heavenly marriage has been introduced in its place, the spiritual state of the disciple is such as is described in the beautiful imagery of the inspired psalmist: “Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion; and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy



children's children, and peace upon Israel." The wife is a fruitful vine by the sides of his house when the spiritual love of truth pervades the whole mind, clinging to the will with the tendrils of its warm affections, beautifying the intellect with the foliage of its truths, and enriching the life with its fruits of holy living. The children are olive plants round about the table, when the affections and thoughts that proceed from the new will and understanding are receptive of heavenly good and its delights. And the spiritual man sees his children's children, and peace upon Israel, when, in the ever-advancing work of regeneration, he has a delightful perception of the successive development and increase of the pure and innocent affections of goodness and truth, and has experience of that inward spiritual peace which is the fruit of love and faith, and which the Lord imparts to his true disciples. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." The peace which the world gives is the peace of worldly-minded prosperity; that which the Lord gives is the peace that is the fruit of conquered sin—the result of successful warfare against selfishness and worldly-mindedness; the peace that reigns in the heart when all its evils have been cast out, and heavenly affections have been received from the Lord. Thus shall the man be blessed who takes up his cross, and denies himself, that he may be the Lord's disciple.

## SERMON XVI.

## THE HARMONY OF THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

“And his name one.”—ZECHARIAH xiv. 9.

AMONG the Hebrews names were given, not simply to distinguish one person from another, but to express the quality or character of the person named. For this reason, “name,” in the Word, signifies quality or character; so the name of God signifies the Divine character. In consequence of this, Jesus Christ calls himself the NAME of God, because his life was a perfect exhibition of the divine character, and because he that saw and knew him saw and knew the Father. When the Lord was glorified, and his humanity had become one essence as well as one person with his divinity, there was the fulfilment, in its highest sense, of the divine prediction, “In that day there shall be one LORD, and his NAME one.”

But there is a unity of the divine attributes as well as of the divine and human essence; and the recognition of this unity, or harmony, is as necessary to the spiritual interests of the church and its members as the

as the acknowledgment of the oneness of Jehovah and Jesus.

The perfection of the divine character, resulting from the harmony of the divine attributes, is that which gives religion all its moral beauty and all its moral power. The sincere worshipper of God becomes gradually formed into his moral image. Indeed, every sincere worshipper becomes assimilated to the object of his worship. From this arises the importance of just views of the divine attributes and character. The Prophet Micah teaches this when he says, "All people will walk every one in the NAME of his god, and we will walk in the NAME of the Lord our God for ever and ever," (iv. 5.) Our own spiritual character has its secret ground in the character of the divinity we truly worship.

To see the nature and harmony of the divine attributes it is necessary to trace them to their origin.

All the attributes of God may be traced to two principles of the divine nature—LOVE AND WISDOM. Love and wisdom are commonly regarded simply as attributes. They are not, however, mere attributes, but are essentials of the divine nature. They may not improperly be called the divine will and the divine understanding; for the divine will can be nothing but infinite love, and the divine understanding can be nothing but infinite wisdom; and to these, as constituting the divine mind, yea, the very divine essence, all attributes must of necessity belong. There are, in fact, no attributes which

may not be traced to these two essentials of the divine nature.

Mercy, clemency, goodness, and similar attributes are evidently qualities of the divine love, and are the divine love itself under different aspects, or in accommodation to mankind in different states. So again, truth, justice, faithfulness, and similar attributes are qualities of the divine wisdom, and are the divine wisdom itself in its different aspects and operations. Not only are the moral attributes of God referable to his love and wisdom; his immensity and eternity, his omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence have the same relation.

The immensity of God is not infinite space, nor his eternity infinite time; but space and time are their effects and images. The divine infinity in relation to space is called immensity, and in relation to time is called eternity. The divine immensity is an attribute of love, and the divine eternity of wisdom. The reason is, that the infinity of love gave birth to the immensity of creation, as the means of satisfying its desire to bestow happiness on the inhabitants of unnumbered worlds, and form from them a heaven of ever-increasing immensity, perfection, and blessedness; and the infinity of wisdom gave birth to time, as the means of progressively perfecting the objects of infinite love. Omnipresence, which has relation to space, is more an attribute of love, and omniscience is evidently an attribute of wisdom. It is hardly necessary to remark that no attribute belongs to love alone, or to wisdom alone; for the reason that love

and wisdom, though distinct, are perfectly one; so that whatever belongs to love is full of wisdom, and whatever belongs to wisdom is full of love.

The attribute of omnipotence we have reserved for a separate remark. The prominence of this attribute in our conceptions of Deity, and the ideas we very naturally entertain regarding it, may justify the bestowal upon it of more particular attention. We are liable to regard it as similar to the physical power of man, to which, however, it can have no resemblance but that of analogy.

If we look even at the material universe, that marvellous exhibition of omnipotence, and which is most likely to suggest the idea of physical power in its creation and support, we shall find that what we are inclined to regard as the production of infinite force is in reality the result of infinite wisdom. What is the power by which the planets are preserved in their orbits, or balanced on their steady poles? Is it not infinite wisdom, acting of course from infinite love? For does not gravity exclude the idea of physical power? The power of God is therefore equally manifested in the least and in the greatest of his works—in the animalcule, where the wonders of animal mechanism are displayed, and the mysteries of life are comprehended, in a form a million times smaller than a grain of sand; and in the astral heavens, where the mind is lost in its effort to conceive of their immensity! Do not both proclaim to us that divine power is infinite wisdom operating from infinite love? What then is divine power but divine love and wisdom in their creative and conservative, and now

also in their redeeming and saving operations? Love, wisdom, and power, form the trinity in the divine nature, as distinguished from, yet making one with, the trinity in the divine person of divinity, humanity, and proceeding life; and unity is an essential characteristic of both.

This unity and harmony of the divine attributes might be shown to be exhibited and imaged in the whole of creation. But if the nature of God is to be seen reflected in any of his works, it must eminently be in man, who was created in the image and likeness of his Maker. As God is love itself and wisdom itself, man was created to be a recipient of love and wisdom from God. We find, therefore, that man has two distinct faculties for the reception of life from God,—a will for the reception of his love, and an understanding for the reception of his wisdom. Now we know that all the human attributes can be traced to these two faculties. To the will belong goodness, mercy, compassion; to the understanding belong truth, justice, sincerity. The first belongs to love, which is the universal of all the affections; the second to wisdom, which is the universal of all the perceptions. With respect to power, in relation to man, it is the united activity of his will and understanding—of his affection and perception. This may be made evident by considering the order of the mind's progression from ends to effects, or from motives to actions, which will enable us at the same time to perceive the order in which the divine mind itself operates in the divine works.

Every work, whether divine or human, must have an end and a cause, the work itself being the effect, in which we recognize power.

In every human action the mind must have an end in view, and this end has its origin in the will. When a man has an end in view, he employs his understanding to provide the means necessary for its accomplishment; and the end, acting by the cause, produces the effect. Every action, therefore, which a sane man performs is the result of the united activity of his will and understanding.

The same order which prevails in every properly human action must eminently exist in every divine work; for as the human mind is an image of the divine, its orderly operations must image those of the mind of God. In every divine work God must have an end in view, and that end must have its origin in his will, which is infinite love. But God makes use of means to accomplish his ends, and these are necessarily the result of his understanding, which is infinite wisdom.

No work or act of God can proceed in any other order than this,—divine love intends, divine wisdom executes. And as the divine love can intend nothing but what is good, and as love ever acts according to divine wisdom, nothing can ever proceed from God, or be done by him, but what is infinitely and essentially good and wise.

If, then, love and wisdom, existing in perfect unity, constitute the very essence of Jehovah God, and are themselves the attributes of all attributes, it is obvious

that the divine attributes must be in the most perfect harmony, and can never come into conflict. Yet, during many ages in the history of fallen man, the opinion has been entertained that there are conflicting attributes in the divine nature; and on this idea is founded one of the most prevalent human ideas of ancient and modern times—that one attribute can, by propitiation, be reconciled with another. If this opinion has no ground in reality, it must, to have been so extensively prevalent, have some ground in appearance. It may therefore be well to consider some of the appearances in which it has originated, and on which it rests.

It appears as if there was something conflicting in the nature of justice and mercy—that the one was severe and exacting, the other tender and forgiving. But the disharmony of these attributes has been inferred from what they have come, in too many cases, to be in the minds and affairs of men, not from what they are in the nature and dealings of God. There is not, indeed, any natural or necessary antagonism between justice and mercy even in the minds and affairs of men; nor is there always a real, when there is an apparent, disagreement between them. The sovereign of our own country is wisely invested with the power of extending forgiveness to those whom the laws of the country cannot but condemn; and in this there is an appearance of mercy superseding justice. But this arrangement has been made, not that mercy may disarm justice, but that justice may be tempered with mercy; or, rather, that the operations of the



law may not be inconsistent with the dictates of justice. The legitimate effect of this arrangement is rather to reconcile these attributes than to set them at variance. If human laws were perfect, and human judges were not liable to error or partiality, no such provision as this would be necessary to shield the victim of the law from its penalty. But the necessary imperfection of human laws and their administrators renders it possible that their decisions may be unjust, or that they may demand more than the ends of justice require. The royal prerogative is therefore intended to soften the severity of the law—to remove that in its decisions which is beyond the ends of justice, and thus to restore the harmony between mercy and justice which the imperfections of the law and its administrators may have partially destroyed. More than this was never intended by the exercise of this prerogative; and more than this would be injurious to the cause of order, which it is the ostensible object of all human laws to preserve or restore. Mercy that acts without respect to justice is not true mercy, and justice that acts without regard to mercy is not real justice; and in their consequences they may be the opposite of merciful and just. There is no possibility of dividing without injuring or destroying them. The efforts of wise men and enlightened nations have always, therefore, been as far as possible to harmonize them. And it may be safely affirmed, that the people who, in the enactment and administration of their laws, make the nearest approach to the union of mercy and justice, occupy the first

rank, not only in civilization, but in morals and religion.

But although an arrangement of this kind is necessary in human governments, it cannot be required in the government of God. The divine justice must be so perfect that its decisions can never require to be modified, much less reversed. No case or circumstance can occur in which the mercy and justice of God can come into collision; for no law can proceed from the Most High in which justice and mercy do not perfectly concur. Among the laws of God we do not number those which were permitted to the Jews for the hardness of their hearts; although these were no doubt perfectly adapted to the state of the people for whose use they were allowed. The moral law is in itself perfect—being the law of mercy as well as of justice; and no jot or tittle could pass away from it—no abatement could be made from its requirements—which would not be as inconsistent with mercy as with justice. What law would mercy blot out from the decalogue? what moral precept would she erase from the whole Word of God? Is there one of the least of the requirements of justice which mercy could abolish without positive injury to man?—without leaving some evil uncorrected, or some good unattained—without leaving the state and character of man so much the worse for its removal? The great end of justice is to make men just; the great end of mercy is to make them merciful; but no man can be just at the expense of mercy, nor merciful at the expense of justice. As the justice and

mercy of God unitedly operate to promote one great end—the perfection and happiness of man—God seeks to accomplish this end by the uniting of mercy and justice in finite minds, that man, as to his moral virtues, may be an image of God as to his moral perfections.

It may, however, be objected, that it is not in giving laws that justice is opposed to mercy, but in demanding satisfaction for their violation. But here let us ask, What is the satisfaction which divine justice requires of men? It is a prevailing opinion that divine justice requires perfect obedience to its laws, or the death of the sinner. And man having sinned, it is assumed that the sentence, which must be executed, could only be removed from the guilty by Jesus Christ suffering death in their stead. But if the death of the sinner was the satisfaction which divine justice required, that satisfaction it had already received from the offenders themselves; for the apostle assures us that as sin had been committed, so death had been experienced by all mankind. “Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” The divine justice—we may rather say, the divine mercy—had warned man that disobedience would be followed by death, and death did follow disobedience as an effect follows its cause. This death was what the apostle calls the death of sin—the extinction of the life of righteousness—the effacing from the soul of the moral image of God, and the consequent separation of man from Him whose love is life.

This death; and the misery resulting from it, could

be no satisfaction to God, or to any of his attributes; for all the divine attributes being the qualities inherent in infinite love and wisdom, cannot do otherwise than desire the happiness of men, and continually operate, by divine means, to promote it. We cannot, therefore, suppose that any divine attribute could derive satisfaction from the death or the sufferings of sinners, much less from the sufferings of the innocent in place of the guilty. It is indeed just, and even merciful, that the wicked should suffer, —not that suffering can be any satisfaction to divine justice; but because the punishment of the evil is necessary for the protection of the good, and for their own amendment or correction.

Besides the appearance of disharmony amongst the divine attributes, presented by contemplating certain of those attributes in the light of mere human intelligence, there are appearances in the Scriptures themselves which favour the same conclusion. From the language of the Word it seems as if the divine mind could not only be excited to severity, but kindled into wrath, and, on the other hand, melted into tenderness and pity. But the Divine Being is described in Scripture very often and very much in accommodation to the states of mankind; and we must form very imperfect views of the attributes and character of God if we abide by the mere letter of the Sacred Writings. In the Scriptures God is not always represented as he is, but often as he appears to fallen man to be. In presenting himself to man, accommodated to his state of sinful imperfection, the Lord

acts in accordance with wisdom and mercy; for man can only be affected and controlled through an idea of the nature and dealings of God suited to his own state and apprehensions. Had man never sinned God had never seemed to frown. By the pure God is seen in his purity, but to the froward he shows himself froward. When man became of such a character that he could no longer be influenced by love, God permitted that he should be impelled by fear. In the long ages of spiritual darkness which have existed since the fall, God has been worshipped for his power and authority more than for his goodness and wisdom; and had not the Most High been clothed with terrors, many who have done reverence in his temple and uses in his church would have sunk into apathy or atheism. Even in our own day many suppose that if there was nothing in God to conciliate or appease, worship would be little more than a name. While all acknowledge that the Almighty is unchangeable, yet most seem practically to believe that he can be entreated to clemency; that he can be turned from the severity of his justice or the fierceness of his wrath; and that in this is the safety of the sinner.

But how is anger or any similar feeling possible with God? In what attribute of his nature can it be supposed to originate? All is love and light in the High and Holy One, and nothing but love and light can proceed from him. The sun cannot send forth light and darkness; the same fountain cannot send forth sweet waters and bitter.

While, however, the Scriptures speak of God as

being angry and wrathful, anger and wrath are never spoken of as attributes or inherent qualities of the divine nature, as love and mercy are. The beloved apostle declares that God is Love; but no form of expression occurs in the Scriptures that can give the most remote idea that he is anger; while they distinctly declare that fury is not in him—that He changes not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. From the Word itself, therefore, reason may be enlightened to distinguish between the real and the apparent truth; for reason may conclude that if anger is not in God it cannot proceed from him. Spiritually as well as naturally the Lord causes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and he sends his rain on the just and on the unjust. He is kind even to the unthankful and to the evil: his tender mercies are over all his works. He is the same yesterday and for ever.

But although the attributes of God must ever be in perfect harmony in God himself, and in all his operations, they may nevertheless be divided and set at variance in the minds, as they have come to be in the creeds, of their human recipients. Goodness and truth, mercy and justice, are united in the divine mind, and proceed as one from the Divine Being; but they are not always received as one by human beings. Too often men receive the truth of God without his goodness, the justice of God without his mercy, and thus they become subjects of his truth and justice, without being at the same time subjects of his goodness and mercy. The truth

of God received alone is what condemns. All condemnation arises from knowing the truth, without loving and doing the good which it teaches. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Men therefore receive their judgment in themselves; they are self-convicted by the truth which they know. "If any one hear my words, and believe not," says the Lord, "I judge him not: he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

The view which has now been presented of the divine attributes has an eminently practical tendency. It removes all those misapprehensions respecting the divine character which have any tendency to diminish our love and reverence for the Divine Being, and shows him to be an object worthy of perfect love and voluntary service.

It has indeed been objected that all such views remove the fear of God, and diminish the authority of his law—that a God all mercy is a God unjust. It is supposed that if God were always to act from mercy the wicked would escape; and, on the other hand, if he were always to act from justice, even the righteous would be involved in condemnation. The Word of God presents this subject in a different light—it represents God as judging from mercy and forgiving from justice. The psalmist, addressing the divine Judge, says, "Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth

mercy; for thou renderest unto every man according to his works." And the apostle John declares that "if we confess our sins, God is just to forgive us our sins." The one testifies that the Lord is merciful in the exercise of his justice, the other, that he is just in the exercise of his mercy.

The Divine Being, while he proclaimed himself before Moses as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," at the same time announced the awful truth, that he would by no means clear the guilty. What the Divine Being will not do he cannot do; for the will and the power of God make one. He cannot clear the guilty, because guilt and punishment, sin and suffering, are bound together by an eternal and unchangeable law—the law of cause and effect; and even infinite mercy and power cannot force them asunder.

This view of the origin of punishment and misery is the very perfection of practical truth. It impresses the mind with the salutary conviction that there is no possible way of escape for the sinner but by ceasing to sin: that there is no way of becoming an object of saving mercy in the life to come but by becoming a subject of that mercy in the life that now is. It is the merciful only who shall obtain mercy, the pure in heart that shall see God.

If, then, there is no refuge from sin but in righteousness, no way of receiving mercy but in justice, seek the blessing where it is to be found—in the possession and exercise of love and truth. Seek



not to turn away the divine justice as an enemy, but to turn to it as a friend. Ask not to be relieved from its claims, but seek to be strengthened to fulfil its obligations. Crave not the extension of mercy to shield you from punishment, but pray for its operation to deliver you from evil. Look for salvation through the realization of the divine image in yourselves. The Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ, is your pattern. In his holy life he exhibited the harmony of all the divine attributes. In him the divine NAME was truly ONE. And those who would enter into his rest must aspire and strive after that moral harmony of which he gave so perfect an example. They must unite in their minds and in their lives mercy and justice, goodness and truth.

## SERMON XVII.

## THE REPRESENTATIVE CHARACTER OF JUDAS.

“The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.”—MARK xiv. 21.

JUDAS is one of the enigmas of history, and one of the mysteries of Revelation. It is difficult, naturally considered, to form a satisfactory idea of his character, or clearly to understand why he was chosen as an apostle.

We can hardly imagine the possible existence of one so utterly depraved as to meditate and plan, and, with cool deliberation and consummate hypocrisy, commit a crime of such enormity as the betrayal of his holy and beneficent Master to certain destruction for a few pieces of silver. But, having done the fearful deed, it is hardly less difficult to suppose such quick and poignant remorse as that which prompted him to seek to purchase the liberation of his victim with the price he had received for his blood, and to cast down the wages of his iniquity, and then rush

to self-destruction when he failed in his object. So strongly has this difficulty been felt, that a solution has been proposed on an entirely different theory. This theory supposes that Judas, believing, with the rest of the apostles, that the Lord had come literally to restore the kingdom to Israel, in which his servants would be raised to dignity and wealth, had become impatient for its establishment, and only delivered Jesus into the hands of his enemies in order to bring matters to a crisis, which would result in the Lord delivering the Jews from the Roman power, and assuming his own regal dominion.

If there are difficulties on one side of this subject, the other is not entirely free from them. It appears as if Judas had been chosen for his bad qualities, and been placed in circumstances which, if they did not hold out inducements, at least afforded him opportunities, to indulge his ruling propensities. A devil, yet chosen to the holiest office which a human being could fill; a thief, yet entrusted with the bag; a traitor, yet admitted to the confidence of his Master. Notwithstanding all this, he is subjected to the severest censure and the most awful condemnation. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

The common opinion on this subject has at least the merit of simplicity. It supposes Judas to have been chosen to the sacred office of an apostle for the accomplishment of the Lord's death. And so useful

an agent has he appeared to some minds in contributing to redemption, that Judas was held in great veneration by a heretical sect in the early Christian church.

No doubt Judas was necessary, or he would not have been chosen. But there can be no reasonable doubt that there was no necessity for him as a means of procuring the Lord's death. That could have been accomplished without him. A sufficient number were thirsting for his blood to insure for him a violent death, unless he himself had been unwilling to suffer. But so far was this from being the case, and so impotent was human power to procure his death, that the Lord declared no man took his life from him. He laid it down of himself: he had power to lay it down, and he had power to take it again.

The necessity for Judas and his treacherous work lay far deeper in the region of causes, in the character and experience of the Redeemer, and in the plan of redemption, than his being an instrument for delivering Jesus into the hands of the Jews to be crucified, that he might rise again the third day. The choice of every agent whose name and acts have found a place in the inspired history of the Redeemer and redemption, besides other causes, had its ground in the necessarily representative character of the apostles, both in relation to the church and to the Lord.

The twelve apostles represented the church, and, abstractly, all the principles that constitute the church in man. Collectively, they thus represented the Lord's mystical body, which, in some measure and degree,

they formed. But the Lord's mystical body is an image of his own body. And the apostles, while Judas was amongst them, represented the Lord's mystical body as an image of the Lord's own personal body, while it retained some of the imperfections inherited from the mother Mary. The Lord's temptations and sufferings had also their images or analogies in those of his disciples. Hence the Lord speaks to the apostles as those who were with him in his temptations, and who followed him in the regeneration. They were with him, not as followers and witnesses only, but as fellow-sufferers. They drank of the cup that he drank of, and were baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with. In their limited degree they were his companions in tribulation; and his promise to them was, that they should be companions with him in his glory. Having followed him in the regeneration, they were to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It does not follow that Judas was personally to realize that promise. Nor, indeed, was that promise given to them as individuals, but as the representatives of principles; the promise spiritually meaning that the Lord alone judges all men, by and according to the divine truths of which the apostles were the types. As the apostles themselves were representative, so was their history; so were the promises they received regarding the places of dignity they were to occupy in the Lord's kingdom. But although Judas himself might not realize these promises in any sense in which they are to be understood, yet, as the promise was given to the

twelve while he was among them, "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," the Lord's declaration teaches that the principles which the apostles individually typified, and the mystical body which they collectively represented, would be preserved entire, whatever they might be and experience individually.

Now, if there was an analogy between the Lord's own body and his mystical body, there must have been a principle in the Lord's yet unglorified body which Judas represented. And if the states through which the Lord passed were imaged in the experience of his apostles, the transgression of Judas must have represented a temptation of the Lord himself. Looking at Judas in this light, we may be enabled to penetrate the mystery of his character and actions, and to understand the declarations of our Lord and the record of the evangelists respecting him.

In the first prophecy which the Scriptures contain respecting the Lord's coming into the world, the Lord God is represented as addressing the serpent in these words: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It appears, therefore, that while, in his mighty conflict with the powers of darkness, the Lord was to conquer by bruising the head of the serpent, yet there was to be a vulnerable part even in him—the HEEL that Satan should bruise. This vulnerable part of the Lord's humanity was the corporeal principle, of which the heel is the emblem. And we know that this in the

Lord was so far vulnerable that the powers of darkness were able to bruise it, even to the extinction of the Lord's corporeal life, when the Saviour, in his last temptation and agony, died upon the cross.

As there is an analogy between the personal and the mystical body of the Lord, in the mystical body likewise there must have been a vulnerable part—a heel that Satan could bruise, and which he did bruise when the whirlwind of temptation, that raged at its utmost height during the passion of the cross, swept over the new-born church which the Lord had been forming in his likeness. And who among the members of the Lord's mystical body was the HEEL that Satan could bruise, but Judas himself? All the other members were tempted; but he alone by transgression fell. He represented the corporeal principle in the church and in man—the principle in human nature corresponding to that in the Lord's humanity which Satan bruised. The fall and death of Judas were therefore analogous to the last temptation of the Lord, and the death of his body on the cross.

There is another particular relating to Judas that shows the analogy of which we now speak, which explains the deep spiritual cause of his treacherous work, and shows the kind of necessity there was for his agency in procuring the Lord's death. The bruising of the Lord's heel, or of his corporeal principle, which was the extreme of his temptations, had its cause in the perverted state of the corporeal principle in our common humanity, and especially as it was in the church. Judas, who represented that principle in

the church, therefore committed the actual crime of betraying the Lord; and no doubt his act was a fitting symbol of the operations against the Lord which proceeded from that principle in fallen man.

The representative character of Judas, with the nature and analogy of his treacherous work, are not the mere deductions of reason, but are clearly, though symbolically, stated in the Word. In the 41st Psalm it is written, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat my bread, hath lifted up his HEEL against me." This prediction is applied to Judas by the Lord himself in the 13th of John. "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his HEEL against me." The prophecy which declares, in the language of correspondence, that the bruising of the Lord's corporeal principle would be effected through the instrumentality of the corporeal principle in man, evidently refers to that principle as it would exist in human nature, not in the world generally, but in the church.

The choice of Judas was therefore a necessity. The number of the apostles would have been incomplete without him, as the mystical body, which the apostles represented, would have been deficient without the principle of which Judas was the type. But this principle, as it was in humanity, even within the church, before the Lord had assumed and glorified it, was so corrupt that the twelve could not have represented the body of which this was the heel, unless, of



the twelve chosen, one had been a devil. This one, like the others, did eat the Lord's bread; but this one, unlike the others, lifted up the heel against him; and unlike the others, this by transgression fell.

The parallel between the Lord's mystical and his personal body seems as if it ended with the death of Judas. But this, so far as it is truly the case, arises from the difference between the Lord and his church and man, in respect to the principle which Judas represented.

The Lord, whose death had been effected by the powers of darkness, rose from the dead. He rose also with his whole body complete; the very heel which Satan had bruised having been delivered from his grasp, and restored to liberty and life, and made the power by which the Redeemer treads on the neck of his enemies. The Lord glorified the very corporeal principle of humanity, even to the very body, with which he arose a Glorious Divine Man; and as such a man he said, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." In him humanity, to its very ultimates, was made divine, and Life itself; so that he can save to the uttermost, or reach even those in the lowest possible states of degradation. But where was the analogy to this in the corporeal principle of the Lord's mystical body, which Judas represented? Judas did not rise again as to the body, nor is there anything said of him in the gospels to countenance the idea, that he was among those who in any sense obtain the resurrection from the dead. True, it is said he repented and returned the money; but it is said

also that he went and hanged himself; and he is afterwards spoken of as one who had fallen by transgression. But although Judas died, his office did not expire with him, or remain vacant. So essential was it that his place should be supplied, and the mystic number of the apostles be completed, that, ages before, prophecy had said, "Let another take his office." Accordingly, after the Lord's ascension, his office was given to another. Not Matthias, however, who was then chosen by lot, but Paul, who was called and appointed an apostle by the Lord himself, is generally recognized as the successor of Judas. The new apostle represented the new corporeal principle, the same principle, after the death of the old man, that Judas represented before the life of the selfhood is actually laid down. In no other way than by the death of one apostle and the appointment of another could this representation have been effected.

But there must have been a reason for Judas not being, like Peter, restored by repentance, but falling utterly, and ending his days, and another taking his office. That reason may be found in one important particular by which the Lord's case is distinguished from that of any other man. In the Lord all was glorified or made divine, but in man all is not regenerated or made spiritual. Not only does man's corporeal body never rise from the dead, but his corporeal principle is never, at least in the present state of human nature, actually or fully renewed, so as to bring it into correspondence with the Lord's humanity. While the deep depravity of this principle of human

nature was fitly represented by the historical character and conduct of Judas, it has nevertheless a better side, and a condition of which that is capable, which makes it necessary that another should take his office. The corporeal principle is twofold. It consists of delights and of perceptions, which have been received through, and which adhere to, the five bodily senses. The delights or concupiscences are subject to the voluntary faculty of the inner man, and the perceptions are subject to the intellectual faculty.

That part which consists of concupiscences cannot be regenerated. It is "the carnal mind, that is enmity against God, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," and must be put off. But that part which consists of perceptions or knowledges can be renewed, and become serviceable to the higher intellect. The one, like Judas, dies a transgressor, the other, like Paul, is renewed from a state of transgression. Judas was the traitor, Paul was the persecutor: one sinned willingly, the other mistakenly: the one fell the miserable victim of the lowest cupidity, the other rose the noble conqueror of the strongest prejudice and passion: the light of the one was turned into darkness, the darkness of the other was turned into light—a light that shone with such lustre and power as to enlighten many lands with the knowledge of the Lord the Saviour.

Having now taken a general view of the representative character and conduct of Judas, we come to consider the Lord's declaration, that it had been good for the man who should betray him if he had never

been born. This, there is reason to think, was said of Judas rather as to his representative than his personal character.

If God, who is the author of existence, does all things well, can we suppose it possible that it would have been good for any man never to have been born? If in any case non-existence is to be preferred to existence, birth has been a curse, and the extinction of life would be a blessing.

But if it is not better that any one should be deprived of existence, it cannot be better that he should never have existed. God has the sole power of calling into being. The subject of natural birth has no choice in the commencement of his own existence. And if it can be said of one that it would have been good for him he had never been born into the world, that must be regarded as an intimation that it were better the Creator had never been the author of his being. Yet whatever depends only on the will and power of God can never have been better left undone.

This subject has, however, a general as well as an individual aspect. The human race is as one man, of which its individual members form the particular parts. If a Judas was necessary to complete the Lord's mystical body, may not a corresponding part be required to complete the body of general humanity? This at least is certain, that the great man of the human race must, like the individual man, have all his parts, and, among them, the corporeal principle. It is not necessary that any should utterly fall, although,

in the present state of the human race, the fall of some, or of many, may be unavoidable. The natural birth of such is therefore to be traced to the operation of a general as well as to a particular Providence. But in both the Lord is equally wise and good.

But although natural birth is beyond the choice and control of those who are the subjects of it, there is a birth in which man's choice and agency are directly concerned. This is birth, not into natural but into spiritual life, not into the world but into the church. This birth, although, equally with natural birth, effected by divine power, does not, and cannot take place without man's consent and co-operation. If it rested solely with God, not only would all be born again, but all would be preserved in the state of life they had attained by regeneration. Then spiritual, like natural birth, would be a blessing to all who experienced it. For by natural birth all have the capacity of becoming angels. And so perfectly is this capacity preserved, even in these degenerate times, when man is born in every kind of hereditary evil, that every one who departs out of the world as blameless as he entered it becomes an angel. Nor can any one ever deprive a human soul of his heavenly birthright but himself; for not only does every one who dies in infancy become an inhabitant of heaven, but every one also who departs before he reaches the period when he becomes wicked from rational choice. So that by natural birth God brings none but incipient angels into existence. Natural birth can be considered therefore only as a blessing. But spiritual birth can

be either a blessing or a curse. And it can be so, because the free will of man enters into it. That which is of the will of God only must in itself be only and always a blessing; that into which the will and choice of man enter may prove eventually either a blessing or a curse. For what is done by the consent and co-operation of man's free will, can also be undone by the choice and operation of the same free will. God leads man in freedom out of darkness into marvellous light, and therefore man has the freedom to lead himself from light back into the blackness of darkness, and from a spiritual into a natural and infernal state of life.

It is true that the ever-watchful care of a tender and all-seeing Providence is constantly extended over all men, to prevent, as far as possible, any entering interiorly into the truths of faith, farther than he can be preserved in them to the end of life. But the free will and agency of man would require in some instances to be violated or destroyed, to prevent this universally and in any degree from taking place. So long as man is a free, and therefore an accountable being—without which he would cease to be human—his passing from life unto death, after he has passed from death unto life, is a possibility. It is not necessary for us to speculate on its probable amount in actual realization. Its possibility is all that we have at present to concern ourselves about. All that is necessary for the elucidation of the present text, and for acquiring from it the lesson it was designed to teach, is, that it is possible for those who

were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gifts, and of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, to fall away, and to crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.

Now, it is that falling away from a state of life to a state of death that makes us traitors; for it makes us betray the Lord that redeemed us, sell the Lord that bought us, and deliver him into the hands of his enemies through the feigned kiss of love and friendship. The Lord can be betrayed only by one who has been among his followers, and numbered among his friends. It is only such a one that can crucify to himself the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. The Lord's enemies may hate him, and persecute him, and desire to destroy him; but his professed friends only can betray him. This they do both by crucifying him in their hearts, and bringing disgrace on his cause by their evil lives.

The peculiar force of our Lord's declaration in the text lies in the important fact, that whoever, having once entered on the life of religion, falls eventually and permanently away, makes his last state worse than his first. Whoever once follows the Lord, and yet finally betrays him; in other words, whoever once inwardly acknowledges his truth in his heart, and afterwards gives way to his natural cupidities, and yields his convictions up to the power and dominion of his own wicked principles and sinful life, spiritually delivers the Lord up to be scourged, and mocked, and crucified, and brings himself into a worse state, and into severer suffering, than if he had never confessed him. He is

not simply without the Lord's truth; he has it within him perverted and profaned. He is not simply one who has never been born into the new life of the Saviour; he has destroyed that life in himself. He is not simply destitute of the Lord's blessing; he has turned that blessing into a curse. If we can in any degree realize the idea of the enormity of this crime, which that of Judas represented, and the extent of retribution which it brings upon those who commit it, the true force of the Lord's declaration may in some measure be felt. "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

It is not necessary to suppose that Judas himself had ever been a regenerate man, and that he fell away from a righteous into a reprobate state. The new birth of Judas consisted in his admission into the apostleship. His was an official, not a spiritual birth; he was admitted into the church, but it does not follow that the principles of the church had ever found a place in his heart. His election to the one and admission into the other were sufficient to make him a representative character, and the instrument of representatively exhibiting to the members of the church, in all future ages, the true character of that principle of our fallen nature which forms the root of our greatest sinfulness, and, when we are being regenerated, the ground of our deepest temptations. That of which he was the type is the lowest form of the principle, represented as the serpent that deceived man in paradise, to bruise whose head the Lord



assumed man's nature, and that bruised his heel. This principle of human nature, in its perverted and utterly fallen state, is the common inheritance of every child of Adam; and he who came as the second Adam can alone deliver us from its dominion.

In calling attention to this subject, it has been my purpose, not so much to dilate on the character and acts of Judas himself, as to endeavour to clear up some of the obscurity, or rather mystery, that seems to rest upon the subject. This, I apprehend, can only be done by viewing Judas in his representative character, and tracing out the analogies of his acts. We cannot, indeed, regard with less than detestation such a character,—one who, being the Lord's disciple, could be his betrayer. So inconceivable does such an act, under such circumstances, appear, that some other moving cause than any motive that can be assigned even to Judas, seems necessary to account for the deed. We ask ourselves if it must not have been a demoniacal possession, such as was then not uncommon, and which, for the time, deprived its victims, to some extent, of the power of free determination. We might draw such an inference from the statement, that when he had received the sop, Satan entered into him. But, before this, he had gone to the chief priests, and covenanted with them to deliver Jesus into their hands; “and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.”

So the veil of mystery seems to remain on the personal character of him by whom the Son of Man was betrayed.

But there is no uncertainty as to the spiritual character and eternal condition of those whom he represented; and to this it is our duty and interest to attend. Knowing that we may be among the Lord's disciples, and yet walk inconsistent with our profession; that it is even possible for us to have been partakers of his Holy Spirit, and yet fall away, and so betray and crucify him in ourselves, we have need to take good heed.

On this dark subject, from which angels turn away, it is not desirable that we should look too directly or too long. It is enough to know of its existence, and of its possibility with ourselves, and to see so much of its nature and consequences as may warn us of its dangers, and induce us carefully to guard against everything that might lead, however indirectly, to its actual commission: from which may the Lord in his mercy protect and preserve us!

## SERMON XVIII.

### THE LOOSING OF THE COLT; OR, MAN'S DELIVERANCE BY THE LORD'S GLORIFICATION.

“And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”—MARK xi. 1-10.

THE harmony which is found to exist between the prophets and evangelists in the prediction and record of events is no doubt an evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and of the validity of their claim to be

regarded as the Word of God, and entitled to the faith and veneration of mankind. Still, we cannot suppose this to be the only or principal use intended to be served by the agreement between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament history. We cannot suppose that the Lord's riding into Jerusalem in the manner predicted by the prophet Zechariah was only to testify that he was indeed the King of the Jews, the Christ that should come into the world.

The harmony of the Old and New Testament is that of the two witnesses from God, by whose united testimony every word of divine truth is to be established. The highest subject of their testimony is the oneness of Jehovah and Jesus, and the union of divinity and humanity in the person of the Saviour. In this oneness alone the true character of the Lord Jesus is seen. Without it all other knowledge respecting him, which we derive from the historical facts of Scripture, never truly open the understanding to the perception of the divinity either of the Lord or his Word. The union of divinity and humanity in the Lord's person is the sublime theme of all Scripture prophecy in its inmost sense. And those incidents, however trifling they may seem, which literally bear testimony to his Messiahship, spiritually unfold the mystery of his incarnation, and point out some particulars connected with that divine work, by which his humanity progressed towards complete union with his eternal and indwelling divinity,—a union in which all the purposes and provisions of redeeming love, for the salvation of

the human race, are for ever perfected. This is the subject treated of in the circumstances mentioned in our text in its inmost sense.

But whatever in the inmost sense of the Word relates to the glorification of the Lord, in the internal sense refers to the regeneration of man, which is an image and effect of that divine work. The union of divinity and humanity in the person of the Lord is the origin and the pattern of the union of the spiritual and natural minds in the persons of the regenerate; and this union, which completes regeneration, is effected by the subordination and correspondence of all the principles of the natural mind to those of the spiritual.

In the internal historical sense, the same circumstances relate to the effects of the Lord's divine work in his kingdom, both in the spiritual and in the natural world.

At the period to which our text relates, the Lord was in his progress to his temple in Jerusalem; and he sent two of his disciples to bring him the colt, that he might enter the city with the symbols of regal authority. The temple was a representative of his humanity, as he himself taught, when he said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again. But he spake of the temple of his body." His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, to take possession of its temple, symbolized his approaching glorification, when his resurrection body should become the "holy temple" of his divinity, in which the Infinite and Eternal should be worshipped by his new

and spiritual church. The circumstances which took place in connection with his progress represented the ordination, or orderly arrangement, of all the principles of his humanity, and the consequent progress of his humanity to complete union with his indwelling divinity.

In his progress to Jerusalem the Lord had come to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives—a deeply interesting spot, as being that from which he afterwards ascended into heaven;—“He led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”

Bethphage literally means the house or place of figs, and Bethany the place of dates or palms; the Mount of Olives expresses its own meaning.

As the fig signifies natural good, the palm spiritual good, and the olive celestial good, the state represented is one in which these principles, existing in the inner man, are now about to be brought down in fullness into the outer man. The Lord's sending forth from thence two of his disciples into the village over against them, represented his opening up a communication, by means of good and truth proceeding from himself, between the internal and external man. The purpose of all such communication is, to bring the principles of the lower under subordination to, and into harmony with, those of the higher, and so to unite them in one. This is signified by their loosing and bringing the colt to Jesus, and setting him thereon.

In the Word, where spiritual principles are represented by natural objects, animals are the symbols of the lower human faculties, and the principles of which they are receptive, especially as subordinate and subservient to the higher faculties and principles of the mind. This is the case more particularly with animals which are directly serviceable to man, as the horse, the mule, the ass—the horse signifying the spiritual, the mule the rational, and the ass the natural principle of the mind. It is from the symbolic character of these animals that so much is said of them in the inspired writings, and of kings and judges riding upon them; and it was from their correspondence that the Lord, as a king, made his regal entry into the holy city riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass. The ass's colt, on which he rode, represented the rational principle, or the truth which belongs to it.

In the gospel by Matthew there is mention both of an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass, because an ass signifies the natural principle, and a colt the rational; and the subordination of both to the spiritual is meant by the Lord riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. The rational principle also has its birth from the natural on one side, and from the spiritual on the other. It is the medium also by which the spiritual and the natural, or the internal and external, are united. The rational principle must therefore be formed, before the internal and external can be united, so as to make one. All the inward power and outward means by which the rational principle is formed, are effects from the Lord's presence and operation in the secret chambers of the

human mind, from which he inspires all the affections which lead to the attainment of wisdom—the affection of knowing, of understanding, and of seeing truth.

The work of human regeneration begins at once in the inmost and outermost of the human mind. In all human progression the Lord must be the first and the last, since it is by his operating from first by last principles that intermediate principles are brought into order, and harmony is established in the mind. The progress of regeneration, therefore, and consequently of all that is preparatory to it, is at once upward and downward; there is an ascent and a descent. “Truth springeth out of the earth, righteousness looketh down from heaven.” Truth from the Word opens a way upward, and good from heaven opens a way downward; and if we suffer ourselves to be regenerated, this upward and downward progression goes on, till goodness and truth meet together in the conscience, as the marriage chamber which the Lord, by their means, has gradually formed for their reception, and prepared for their nuptials. Here “righteousness and peace kiss each other.” Goodness and truth enter into that intimate union which constitutes the heavenly marriage, which brings true happiness to the soul, and from which are produced, as their legitimate and lovely offspring, all heavenly graces, with their fruits of righteousness and peace, that make the soul blessed for evermore. This union in us is the result and the image, though a faint one, of the union of divinity and humanity in the person of the Lord.

It is to the approaching consummation of this union



that our text relates, which may be still more clearly seen by considering some of the particulars connected with the finding and loosing of the colt.

The disciples "found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met." As the spiritual transaction which this represents takes place in the mind itself of those who are being regenerated, we must inquire what particular part of the mind is meant by the place where the two ways met, and by the door outside of which the colt was tied.

The mind, as already indicated, consists essentially of two distinct parts, called the internal and the external man, or the spiritual and the natural mind. The spiritual mind is formed to the image of heaven, and communicates immediately with it; the natural mind is formed to the image of the world, with which it has direct communication. These two minds, or divisions of the mind, though distinct, are yet intended to form one. But as no two things, in themselves distinct, can be united but by a medium which partakes of the nature of both, the spiritual and natural minds cannot be conjoined but by means of such a medium. This medium is the rational principle, of which we have spoken, which unites in itself the nature both of the spiritual and natural mind, or of the inner and outer man, because it derives its existence from both, being born of the internal as a father, and of the external as a mother. It is in this part of the mind where the man himself may be said to reside. It is here where the mind holds its court, where the thoughts assemble, where they conduct their deliberations and form their

conclusions, and from which their mandates go forth into words and acts. From this central point man can look through the internal or spiritual mind upward into heaven, and through the external or natural mind downward into the world. In the human mind there are, therefore, two ways—one for its upward and one for its downward progression; and the rational mind is the place where these two ways meet, and the door through which there is immediate communication between them.

The colt was found by the door without, where the two ways met. This simple, but divinely appointed incident, has, like every particular which the Word contains, an important and instructive meaning. Bearing in mind that the rational principle is the place where the two ways meet, and that the colt was a type of the Lord's truth as accommodated to this principle of the mind, we have to consider what is meant by the colt being found tied at the door without. We will first consider this subject in relation to the human mind generally, at the time of our Lord's coming into the world.

Before the Lord's advent, the rational faculty of the human mind was so undeveloped on its spiritual side, that the truth, unable to gain admission into it, and enjoy the intellectual liberty which it can find there only, remained without, bound by the fallacies of sense and science. This state of the human mind, and the resulting condition of the Lord's truth, could not be removed until the Lord had come into the world, by assuming human nature, and opening the rational

faculty in himself, and in others from himself, and freeing that faculty, and his truth which belongs to it, from the bonds which man's reasoning from mere appearances and fallacies had fastened upon it. Until the Lord had come into the world, and effected these great works, truth could not be perceived in the light of a true or spiritual rationality. There was no clear or deep insight into either the Word or the works of God. The veil of appearances, which the Creator had of necessity spread over the face both of nature and of revelation, had not only remained upon them, but, by wrong and perverse reasoning, had been changed into a veil of fallacies and falsities. This veil was "cast over all people, and spread over all nations," so that even those who possessed revelation read Moses with a veil upon their hearts. In the minds of the faithful themselves the truth was more or less fettered by the fallacies of the senses, from which none could shake themselves entirely free.

So universal was this condition of the human mind, that even those who died in the faith remained bound in the intermediate state till the Lord came to "loose" them, and take them up with him, at his ascension, into the Jerusalem that is above. The intermediate state, or world of spirits, is analogous, in the grand man, to the rational principle in the individual man, as heaven is to the internal man, and as hell is to the external man, such as it now is in man's fallen and inverted condition. The world of spirits, as the intermediate region between heaven and hell, and that through which there is an upward passage into the one

and a downward passage into the other, is also the place where the two ways meet. From that central region of the eternal world, into which all souls from all worlds first enter after death, every one must go, by one of these two ways, into a heaven of everlasting felicity above, or into a hell of endless misery below. It was in this middle state and place that the spiritual were preserved till the coming of the Lord; nay, it was here, and at the door without, in the lower earth of that world, that they were detained, as "the spirits in prison," yet as "prisoners of hope," till the Lord, after his resurrection, went to preach deliverance to them. They were then led through temptations, as a means of final preparation, which they had not been able safely to undergo on earth; and the forty days which intervened between the Lord's resurrection and ascension were, like Israel's forty years' temptation in the desert, the sign and measure of the state of temptation which they underwent, preparatory to their entrance into heaven.

It was by the glorification of his humanity, therefore, that the Lord liberated the spiritual, both in the other world and in this, from the bondage in which they had previously been held, and secured to them the intellectual freedom which enabled them to perceive his truth, as well as the moral freedom which enabled them to choose and do the good which it teaches. That the Lord, by his coming into the world, opened the rational faculty, is indeed plainly declared in reference to his disciples. "He opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures." This was

after his resurrection, when, having perfected human nature in himself, he could perfect human nature in the persons of the redeemed. The Lord was the first in whom human nature had been restored, from the state which the fall had brought upon it, to a state of true order; the first in whom the communication between God and man, between heaven and the world, and between the spiritual and natural minds, was opened. "No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven." He that descended was the first to ascend. As Jesus rode upon a colt on which never man sat, and was buried in a sepulchre in which never man was laid, so was he the first in whom humanity was restored from the state of bondage and death, which the fall had brought upon it. He was the first in whom the rational faculty, the distinguishing attribute of man, had ever been fully opened, and brought into perfect harmony with divine truth. Indeed, as he is the only one in whom humanity was ever perfected, so he is the only perfect Man. When the work of reconciliation and absolute harmony had been infinitely perfected in the Lord, then, but not before, could it be finitely perfected in men. As, when Abraham had virtually offered up Isaac, he saw a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, and offered him up for a burnt-offering on the altar he had prepared for the sacrifice of his son, so, when the Lord had offered himself up, as a living sacrifice, he could loosen the faithful from the entanglement in which their rational mind was held by the fallacies of the senses, and having sanctified them on the altar of his divine humanity,

could raise them to a living and an everlasting conjunction with himself.

It will be easily perceived how the subject of the text—the loosing of the colt and the sitting of Jesus thereon—has its fulfilment in the regenerate mind. In the minds of men before they are regenerated, their reason is more or less under subjection to their senses. They reason from the sensual to the spiritual, from the world to heaven, and from the body to the soul—which is to reason from darkness to light. It is only when reason is admmissive of spiritual light that it can see spiritual truth; for spiritual truth can only be seen in its own light. “In thy light shall we see light.” When spiritual light is admitted into human reason, man is brought out of the darkness in which natural light had involved him, and is enabled to see the truth clearly. When the rational faculty is brought out of darkness into light, and out of bondage into freedom, and becomes subordinated to the rule and authority of spiritual principles, it is in its right place, and acts according to true order.

But to see the necessity and the duty of yielding the rational and natural principles of our minds, with all our powers and possessions, to the Lord, and of devoting them to his service, for the promotion of his glory, it is necessary to be more than intellectually enlightened on the subject of religion. There must be a disposition of mind to yield to the influence of the divine goodness, as embodied in those simple declarations of divine truth, which require to be received and answered with a yea, yea, without the more than these—the

doubt and contention of mere reasoning, which cometh of evil. Natural and spiritual reason are distinguished from each other in nothing more than in their acts. Natural reason debates upon all truths, and has no clear perception of any,—not even distinguishing between the false and the true. Spiritual reason sees truth from inward spiritual light, and employs its powers to enlarge the mind's view of the truth, and place it in the light of rational apprehension. In proportion as man becomes truly rational he loses the delight of mere reasoning, and becomes more disposed both to receive and recommend truth on its own intrinsic merits, and on the testimony of its own inherent light. He knows that the spiritual light of truth is in danger of being obscured by excess of reasoning. As earthly vapours, which form a halo round the sun, enlarge the circle of its glory but diminish the splendour of its light, so human reasoning, by surrounding divine truth with a sphere of human glory, dims its heavenly lustre and lessens its enlightening power. We do not mean to say that men ought not to reason upon the truth. This would be to forbid the use of the faculty which God has given for its discernment and for distinguishing between truth and error. As, however, reasoning is an imperfect substitute for perception, and is the result of human declension, it should be exercised with humility, and in deference to the higher authority of revealed truth. Its origin and function should remind us of the duty of cultivating that state of heart which disposes us to listen with an obedient ear to the messages of divine truth, especially on matters

of practice, even when they teach a lesson or make a demand opposed to the suggestions of our natural understandings. It is by this means that the human faculties are brought into a state of order—of unreserved submission to divine authority—into the willing reciprocation of the Lord's gifts and graces, which he so bountifully bestows upon them. This reciprocation of divine gifts was symbolized in the demonstrations of loyalty and devotion, on the part of the disciples and the multitude, to the Lord in his progress to the temple. "They placed their garments on the colt, and spread them in the way; and others cut down branches of the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

The cutting down the branches of the trees, and spreading them in the way, was derived from what took place in their celebration of the feast of tabernacles, when they rejoiced before Jehovah seven days, for having blessed them with an abundant harvest. How appropriate the rejoicings of the disciples and the multitude, now that the Lord had crowned the year of his redemption with the goodness of his love and truth! . And what is the homage and service which the Lord requires of us individually? It is to submit ourselves and all that we possess to his divine authority. As the fall consisted in exalting the lower principles of our nature above the higher, and all above the Lord; so the restoration of man consists in his again submitting sense to reason, and reason to the Word of the Lord.



In this submission the true dignity and happiness of human beings consist; for human nature has all its greatness, its glory, and its blessings, from being in the image and likeness of God in his humanity.

Man's real degradation consists in his spiritual nature being subject to his natural, his rational to his sensual. The Lord, therefore, still spiritually sends his disciples to each of us, to loosen the colt—to make our reason free, and bring it under a blessed submission to his eternal truth. We may feel an inward repugnance to comply with the object of the heavenly message. Some natural principle within us may say,—“Why loose ye the colt?” But let the blessed words—“The Lord hath need of him,” be sufficient for us, and induce us joyfully to consent to a demand enforced by a reason which expresses at once the highest honour and the greatest blessing.

## SERMON XIX.

### THE LORD'S SEPULCHRE.

“ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping : and, as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.”—**JOHN xx. 11, 12.**

ALTHOUGH the resurrection of our Lord, and the circumstances, generally, that are connected with it, took place as they are recorded, yet each involves a meaning distinct from that expressed in the mere historical sense of the letter. As the blessed consequences of that stupendous event are unlimited in their extent, and will be eternal in their duration, so the arcana of wisdom which it contains are unfathomable, and even angels, who desire to look, and do look into them, will ever be discovering new wonders and new beauties.

The spiritual meaning of the Lord's resurrection not only shows what that event implied and effected in the church, and in the states of its members, at the time ; but it more particularly reveals what it implies and will effect, in connection with his second advent and

with human regeneration. The treatment of the Lord, even to his crucifixion, by the Jewish nation, represented the treatment and rejection of the Word (for he was the Word) by the Jewish church; and his resurrection denoted the raising of the Word out of the death of the letter, into the life and glory of the spirit; for the spirit, like the vesture without seam, woven throughout, was preserved entire, though the garment of the letter had been divided, and thus, in relation to the Jews, dissipated and destroyed. But the church established by our Lord has also, as was predicted, become corrupted, and has crucified the Lord afresh by rejecting the doctrine of his true divinity, which is, that he is Jehovah in divine humanity. The divine Redeemer, therefore, in relation to the church at the present day, is, in the prophetic language of the Revelation, "a lamb as it had been slain." As the Lord has been crucified afresh, so has he risen afresh, and risen in greater glory than when he emerged from the tomb; though in his second resurrection he is less perceptible to the carnal eye, and less winning to the carnal mind, than at his first. In a more interior sense, the Lord's resurrection implies, that he rises, yea, is every moment rising, in the hearts of the regenerate.

The resurrection of our Lord being thus significative, the various particulars which are recorded in connection with it have a spiritual meaning. The angels who were seen in the sepulchre, and who first announced to his devoted female followers their Lord's self-deliverance from death, form a leading part of the subject intended for our present consideration. As

every particular recorded of them has an important meaning, it will be useful to examine them minutely.

In the first place, it is necessary to know what is signified by the sepulchre in which the angels were seated.

A sepulchre, when mentioned in the Word, in relation to the good and faithful, signifies resurrection; the reason of which is, that burial to the body is resurrection to the spirit. When men commit the body to its original dust, angels welcome the emancipated soul into its native heaven. It was in consequence of this symbolic meaning of sepulchre and burial that in ancient times the faithful were so desirous of being buried in Canaan; for Canaan represented heaven, and burial in Canaan represented resurrection into heaven. The sepulchre of the Lord must therefore signify resurrection in an eminent sense. And as the sepulchre signifies resurrection, it signifies also that from which a knowledge of resurrection is obtained—that from which mortals are instructed respecting him who is the resurrection and the life, as the women were by the angels in the sepulchre; and that from which such knowledge is obtained is the holy Word. But the Lord's sepulchre represents the Word more especially as to a specific part of its sacred contents—that which treats of the Lord's humiliation. Hence the angels said,—“He is not here, he is risen.” He is no longer in the state of humiliation to which he descended; he is risen, and is above all temptation, suffering, and death; he is no longer material and mortal, but divine, and life itself, even as to his humanity. He is over all, God blessed for ever. Yet the angels invited the disciples to come

and see the place where the Lord lay. So his disciples are still invited to behold and contemplate that state of suffering and humiliation to which the Lord, for their sakes, submitted. And such a contemplation must lead them to wonder and adore, while it shows them through what suffering and humiliation the disciple himself has to pass, in following the Lord in the regeneration.

It will be difficult, perhaps, for some to see that the Lord's sepulchre has so exalted a signification, or that it has even a favourable meaning; but there are some further considerations which may have the power of removing such scruples. The Lord's death and his burial present little difference to the ideas of the mind; but it is worthy of remark that the Lord was put to death by his enemies, but was buried by his friends; the sepulchre, also, in which he was laid—a new sepulchre, in which never man had lain—having been provided by a disciple, and not by the Jews. This sepulchre was in a garden, which signifies wisdom; and was hewn out of a rock, which signifies truth. But although the Jews neither furnished the sepulchre, nor carried him to it, they were desirous to keep him within it, when once he was there; for after his burial, the priests sealed the stone that covered the mouth of the sepulchre, and set a watch.

The sepulchre signifying the Word, the stone upon its mouth signifies its literal sense, which covers and encloses its spiritual sense. The sealing of the stone is therefore a significant act. It presents a type of the determined unbelief of the natural man in everything

divine and spiritual in the Word—divine relating to the Lord and his glorification, and spiritual relating to man and his regeneration. This unbelief not only showed itself in the Jewish church, at the time of the Lord's first coming in the flesh, but manifests itself in this the time of his second coming in the Spirit. For, in the church at the present day, is not the Word of God a "sealed book," as to all that relates to the person, character, and kingdom of the Lord Jesus, and to all that is truly spiritual in the Word itself? But there is cause to rejoice that the angel of the Lord has again descended from heaven, and has rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, opening the way for the Lord to come forth, and for his followers to enter, and learn of him and of heaven, removing for ever the cause of that hopeless inquiry of the faithful,—“Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?”

We shall now turn our attention to the angels within the sepulchre.

It is remarkable, and may tend to enlarge our views of the present subject, to notice that in all the four gospels the account of the angels is different.

In the gospels of Matthew and Mark one angel only is mentioned, while in those of Luke and John two are said to have been seen; and in each gospel their situation or posture is described as different. Matthew records that the women saw an angel sitting on the stone which he had rolled away from the door of the sepulchre; nor does it appear from this evangelist that the women entered the sepulchre at

all. In Mark it is said that an angel sat on the right side of the sepulchre within. Luke states that two angels stood in the sepulchre; and John says that the two angels sat, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

But not only is there a difference in each of the gospels respecting the appearance of the angels; there is also a difference in their accounts as to those who saw them.

According to Matthew, they were seen by Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women; while John distinctly mentions Mary Magdalene alone, as the person who saw the angels.

That some meaning is involved in the selection would appear from the circumstance, that the angels were not seen by Peter and John, who entered and minutely examined the sepulchre. The record of the evangelists respecting these disciples at the sepulchre is also different. Luke mentions Peter only as having come to the sepulchre. Both Luke and John record their having seen the linen which had been wrapped about the Lord's body, with this difference, that John speaks of the napkin which had been about his head as being, not with the other linen, but in a place by itself. It appears also, from the manner in which Divine Wisdom has recorded these circumstances, that as neither of the male disciples saw the angels, so none of the female disciples saw the linen clothes.

If the Scripture had only a literal meaning, an enumeration of these particulars might seem weak and

imprudent; weak, because it might be more curious than instructive; imprudent, because it would be exposing discordances in the Word, which could not be reconciled; for that these are discordances, irreconcilable on the principles of literal exposition, cannot be denied. I have pointed out these literal discordances, however, not only with the view of reconciling them, but for the purpose of showing the wisdom and harmony that arise out of these varieties, when explained according to their spiritual sense, and in reference to the different states in the regenerate life which the spiritual sense unfolds. By this means we shall see in these particulars an additional evidence of the divinity of the Word, perceive the advantages of such a mode of explanation, and obtain some light which may be applied to the improvement of our minds.

It is a principle recognized in the writings of Swedenborg, and has been amply illustrated by authors in the New Church, particularly by Mr. Noble, that the different gospels are adapted to different states of mind; and not only so, but that they actually describe the circumstances and transactions of which they treat, as, in their spiritual ground, they are perceived and accomplished in different minds, or in the same mind in different states of regeneration.

Amongst the regenerate there are two different classes of individuals, originating in two different states of mind and stages in the progress of the regenerate life. In the language of the New Church these are termed celestial and spiritual: the celestial



are those who love the Lord above all things; the spiritual are those who love their neighbour as themselves.

The first two gospels describe things as they appear and apply to the spiritual; the last two describe them as they apply to the celestial.

These things premised, we shall be prepared to see, with greater clearness, what is to be understood by the particulars related respecting the angels.

Angels, when mentioned in Scripture, signify something in its nature or in its origin divine: because, in the first place, Jehovah before his actual incarnation manifested himself in the person of an angel, and in the second place, all that constitutes the angelic state and character is derived from God; so that when God makes use of the agency of angels, he only makes use of what is of himself, and is his own in them.

As there are two distinct classes of regenerate men on earth, so are there two distinct classes of angels in heaven—the spiritual and the celestial; and for the use of them respectively there are two distinct senses in the Word besides the literal sense, which are also termed spiritual and celestial. These two distinct senses in the Word may be aptly represented by angels, whose states are formed from them, and are in correspondence in them.

In the most general view, therefore, the two angels seen in the sepulchre represent these two distinct senses in the Word—the spiritual and celestial, and which may also be called, unitedly, the angelic sense,

because for the use of angels, and for men who cultivate angelic states of mind.

This view will furnish us with a satisfactory reason why one angel only is mentioned in the first two gospels. The first two gospels being adapted to the spiritual, who are in the perception of the spiritual sense of the Word, the sepulchre with one angel represents the holy Word as they perceive it, and they perceive it in its spiritual, and not at the same time in its celestial sense; but when the regenerating man has passed through the spiritual into the celestial state, he then sees the Word in the fullness of the angelic life and wisdom; the sepulchre is tenanted by two angels. Not that those of a celestial character are at the same time in the perception of both of those angelic senses, but they possess the wisdom of both, because they have experienced the states of both. But there is another reason for this difference. In all things of the Word the celestial behold its heavenly principles in a state of union; they do not conceive of love or goodness alone, or of wisdom or truth alone or singly; but they perceive them in the closest conjunction with each other. From this circumstance it is that in the Word two signifies conjunction; which is another reason why two angels were seen in the sepulchre, as recorded in the last two gospels, which relate more especially to those of a celestial character.

But taking all the gospels under one view, we shall no doubt find their internal sense adapted to the progressive advancement, from first to last, of the regenerate life. This may be perceived with some

degree of clearness in the case we are now considering. The progress of the regenerating mind, as to its perception of the internal or angelic sense of the Word, is strikingly represented by the situation and posture, as well as by the number, of the angels.

In the first gospel, the angel, when the woman approached the sepulchre, was seated on the stone which he had rolled away from its mouth. The removal of the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre represented the removal of the literal sense of the Word, and the opening of a way to its internal meaning. If this or some other meaning were not involved in the circumstance, it is difficult to conceive why an angel had to remove the stone, as if the omnipotent Redeemer could not himself have burst open the sepulchre, or have risen without removing the stone at all; just as he entered the room where the disciples were assembled without opening the door. Had this been done, the miracle of the Lord's resurrection would have been, to the Jews and to succeeding infidels, more undeniable; while the priests themselves, who sealed the sepulchre, would have been compelled to admit it. But the Divine Being does not multiply evidence where he knows it will not produce conviction; for this would only increase the evil the Lord is ever desirous to remove; and while he always acts from mercy, his wisdom so provides that spiritual instruction for the use of his church, both on earth and in heaven, shall be stored up in the form and record of his operations.

The angel, then, being seated on the stone, and announcing to the women the resurrection of the Lord,

denotes instruction from the literal sense of the Word respecting the Lord and the glorification of his humanity. The nature of such instruction is here capable of very striking illustration. The literal sense of the Word alone, or by itself, does not give instruction. The letter, when severed from the spirit of the Word, which is done when its spirituality is denied, may be made to speak any sentiment; and hence the saying of the apostle, that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The angel seated on the stone represents the spirit in conjunction with the letter; and when this is the case, man may be instructed from the letter; yet it is in reality the spirit that speaks. A similar representation was made by the Lord himself when he sat on Jacob's well, and told the woman of Samaria all things that ever she did, (John iv. 6.) Jacob's well represented the Word, and the Lord sitting on it represented the divine truth itself above or within, and at the same time in conjunction with, its literal sense. The Lord's speaking from his seat on the well, like the angel addressing the woman from the stone, represented instruction from the letter of the Word.

It is from the stone of the letter, then, that the angel gives man his first knowledge of the Lord of life and glory. But in the second gospel the followers of Jesus are introduced into the sepulchre itself, where they see the angel within it on the right side. Their going into the interior of the sepulchre denotes the entering of the regenerating mind into the internal sense of the Word. The right side signifies what relates to charity or goodness; and their seeing the

angel there denotes the perception of truth from goodness. This is the highest degree of perception to which the spiritual man can attain. When he advances beyond this, he enters the celestial state; and this is treated of in the next two gospels.

And in passing on to the account of the same circumstance as related in Luke and John, an advancement, similar in its nature to that recorded in the preceding gospels, is observable. For while they both mention two angels, Luke speaks of them as standing, and John speaks of them as sitting; and we know, from correspondence, that sitting has reference to a more interior state than standing. Sitting is significative of essence, and of permanence of state and of life; and has especial relation to the will. This may be manifest from those passages in the Word where mention is made of sitting before the Lord, as also of standing and walking before him; for by sitting before the Lord is signified to be with him, and thus, also, to will and to act from him; by standing before the Lord is signified to have respect to, and to understand what he wills; and by walking before him is signified to live according to his precepts. It is in consequence of this signification of sitting, as denoting an interior state, that Jesus is spoken of as sitting at the right hand of God. God is the essential divine essence, Jesus is the divine humanity, and the right hand signifies power or omnipotence. Jesus sitting at the right hand of God signifies the most intimate union, a union as to essence and life, of humanity with the divinity of the Lord after glorification.

It is worthy of remark, that Stephen, when he looked up into heaven, which was opened to him while the Jews were stoning him, saw Jesus standing on the right hand of the glory of God—an appearance which may be supposed to have been well suited, representatively, to his state and circumstances, according to which the Lord appears to every one.

The angels in the Lord's sepulchre being first seen standing, describes, representatively, the intellectual perception of those things or principles which the angels signified; and their being next spoken of sitting, describes the perception of them in the will; or, to express it otherwise, while the angelic principles of the Word are in the understanding, they may be said to stand; but when they are in the will, they may be said to sit. The will is their resting-place, their habitation, their home; yet they must pass through the understanding before they can take up their abode in the will.

But why were the angels seen by the female disciples only, and the linen clothes by the male disciples only? and why were the angels, as described in the last gospel, seen by Mary Magdalene alone?

These questions cannot be satisfactorily answered without knowing the distinct signification of male and female as they occur in the Word, and that of Mary Magdalene as distinguished from the other female followers of the Lord.

By the constitution of their minds, men are more distinguished for depth of thought than tenderness of feeling—women, more for tenderness of feeling than depth of thought. In men, therefore, the understanding

is more active than the will—in women the will is more active than the understanding. As, in Scripture, qualities and their recipient faculties are represented by those in whom they are predominant, men have reference to the understanding and its thoughts, and women to the will and its affections.

When this distinction, in respect to the male and female disciples of our Lord, is understood, the questions we have proposed receive a satisfactory answer, and many other particulars related of the disciples in the gospel history are seen to be full of meaning.

The angels and the linen clothes seen in the sepulchre have the same relation to each other that principles of the will have to those of the understanding. The principles of the will, compared with those of the understanding, are as things living compared with things without life. Clothes, or garments, when mentioned in Scripture, signify what is proper to the understanding; for the affections of the will clothe themselves with the thoughts of the understanding, as one clothes himself with a garment. Hence the Lord himself is so frequently described as to his garments, which denote the truths which proceed from him, which serve to veil his glory, and to present it under appearances suited to the capacities and states of his creatures. Such is the signification of the Lord's garments, by touching even the border of which the diseased received a cure; and such is the signification of the linen clothes which he left in the sepulchre.

The reason, then, why the angels were seen by the female disciples only, is because the angels represented

those heavenly principles of good in the Word, which address themselves immediately to the will and affections, and through them to the understanding, and the women represented those affections of the will. And the reason why, on the other hand, the linen clothes were seen by the male disciples only, is because the linen clothes represented the principles of truth in the Word, which address themselves immediately to the understanding, to which the men correspond.

The women who went to the sepulchre represented the several affections of the regenerate mind by which the Christian disciple is led to seek, and is enabled to receive, from the Word, divine instruction respecting the Lord, and to acquire newness of life. But of these affections the highest and purest is denoted by Mary Magdalene, who is the perfect type of the affection of pure, intense, devoted love to the Lord as the Supreme Good, the Fountain of love to the loving heart. This is the reason why she alone saw the angels sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. The head and the feet signify the highest and the lowest, or the inmost and the outermost; and the Lord is the essential divine truth—the resurrection and the life. To see the divine truth—the resurrection and the life—both in relation to the Lord and to ourselves, from its highest to its lowest, in its heights and depths, is the privilege of those only who have obtained that plenary purification which is beautifully represented in the case of Mary, by the Lord having cast out of her seven devils. Not that Mary, and those she represented, have had more evils



than others, but that they have parted with more; or have submitted themselves so fully to the Lord's saving power and operation, that they have experienced a plenary deliverance from their sins, compared, at least, with that which less devoted minds obtain. They love much because they have been forgiven much, and are forgiven much because they have loved much. Holy and blessed is such a state; how much to be desired! how worthy to be cultivated!

Similar to the reason of the female disciples seeing the angels was that of Peter and John seeing the linen clothes. Peter represented faith, and John charity; and faith and charity together give the intellect a clear and distinct perception of divine truth. The napkin that had been about the Lord's head denotes his divine truth in its highest or inmost degree; the other linen, that which is more external. Like the angels that sat at the head and feet, they denote the truths of the Word as they witness of the Lord, as the First and the Last; the Beginning and the Ending; he who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore; who hath the keys of death and of hell; and who will give to every one that follows him in the regeneration a crown of everlasting life.

How wide and important a field of contemplation does this divine subject open to our minds! Nor is it a subject remote from our Christian experience; but one in which we are individually and nearly concerned. The Lord has risen indeed, and has become the resurrection and the life. And not only has he risen from the tomb; but he has risen again on

a benighted world, and the morning of a new and blessed day has dawned upon mankind; but few there are who seem disposed to turn towards the Sun of Righteousness, though he has risen with "healing in his wings." It is our privilege to have seen him in his rising; yet unless he rises as the day star in our hearts and understandings, his second coming will avail us nothing. Considering that the whole process of the Lord's glorification is the pattern of our regeneration, that we must suffer with him, die with him, be buried with him, rise with him, and walk with him in newness of life, before we can enter into his glory,—let us rise "while it is yet dark," and bend the footsteps of our best affections to the Holy Sepulchre, that we may hear the voice of heavenly truth proclaim,—“The Lord is risen, as he said.”

## SERMON XX.

## SELF-CONDEMNATION.

“ And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man.”—2 SAMUEL, xii. 7.

It is impossible long to peruse the records of human transactions without having cause to mourn over the degeneracy of human nature. History, both sacred and secular, is, to a considerable extent, a record of the vices and follies of mankind. Nor need we be surprised that the sacred volume should present so much of the dark side of the human character. It was meet that the book which reveals the origin of evil and the fall of man, should trace the evil through its devious course, and exhibit the consequences of the fall in the darker doings of corrupt humanity. However painful these recitals may be to our better feelings, and indelicate some of them may seem to our conventional sentiments, they are all capable of producing beneficial effects, when rightly contemplated. The purpose of Revelation, in recording such transactions, is to place crime before us, not only as evil, but as sin; to point it out, not only as a breach of the laws of man, but as

a violation of the laws of God; to show us that the Lord has placed our secret sins in the light of his countenance; and that the sinner, though he may be above the reach of human authority, will not escape the judgment of a righteous God.

A striking exemplification of this is given in the case of David, when the Lord sent Nathan to reprove him for the double crime he had secretly committed in the matter of Bath-sheba, and to pronounce the judgment of divine justice against him for his sins.

The kings of Israel, like those of most other nations of that period, were the judges as well as the rulers of their people. The prophet availed himself of this circumstance to perform his important but delicate mission with the greatest certainty of success. He appeared in the presence of the Israelitish monarch as a claimant for justice to an injured Israelite. Addressing the royal judge, he took up his parable, and said,—“There were two men in one city—the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man; but took the poor man’s lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.” On hearing the recital of this heartless act of cruelty and oppression, David’s anger was greatly

kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan,—  
“As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and had no pity.” By this righteous decree the first object of the prophet was attained. The royal judge had admitted the justice of the poor man’s cause, and had pronounced sentence against his rich oppressor. While David’s zeal for justice and his generous indignation against the rich man were yet hot, the prophet, with the authority and power of a messenger from the Judge of all the earth, pronounced in his ears the awful words,—“THOU art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee to be king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom; and I gave thee the house of Israel and Judah. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.”

No case could more strikingly point the moral delivered in the writings of the apostle,—“He that judgeth another judges himself when he doeth the same things.”

All men have a perception of abstract justice. In some it may be clearer than in others, but in none is it entirely wanting. In a certain sense, and to a certain extent, the divine law is still written on the human mind, though unhappily not now upon the human

heart; and written, too, with the finger of God; for he is the author of every perception which the mind has of right and wrong, of justice and injustice. And not only has every one a perception of abstract justice, but he is able, almost unerringly, to apply it for the regulation of his own conduct. By the power of reflex judgment he can see that, in condemning any evil in another, he condemns that evil in himself. The same power enables him to apply a still more comprehensive law, the law of equity,—“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” This, it is true, is not only a natural but a revealed law: it is “the law and the prophets.” But the laws of nature and of revelation are in harmony; for the same God is the Author of both. Were man in a state of nature, by which I mean a state of order, such as that in which he was created, he would have the law of his nature, which is the law of God, written on his heart, and would require no outward revelation. But having departed from his original state, the law, which he had effaced from the table of his heart, was written for his use upon tables of stone. And even now, by the united operation of the Lord’s Spirit from within, and of his written law from without, every man of sound mind has the power of discerning between right and wrong, and of applying the law of equity, both in judging and in acting. But in the practical part, how often and gravely do we fail! Clearly as we can see justice in the abstract, our passions and prejudices seriously warp our judgment in its application, making us lynx-eyed in detecting others’ faults,

but strangely blind to our own, and greatly indisposing us to do to others as we would that others should do to us.

Strikingly and painfully was this exemplified in the case of David, when, in the name of the God of justice, he pronounced the decree of death and restitution against the rich man who had deprived his poor neighbour of his one ewe lamb, while he himself was stained with the crimes of adultery and murder, for which he had made no restitution either to God or man.

We cannot plead, in behalf of the Israelitish king, that, while he knew the moral law, he had not the means of acquiring the moral principle. At the time his judgment and his actions were so much at variance, he recognized the moral law as the law of God. Nor can we, on the other hand, plead that he only fell through the weakness of sinful flesh, and that his sin was but a momentary spot on the purity of his saintly character. At the same time, in judging of David's sin, we must not forget that he lived under a dispensation far more obscure than that of the gospel. We enjoy a clearer light; but its demands upon us are proportionably greater. Under the Christian dispensation, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart;" and "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment," having made one step towards the crime of murder. Such being the case, we have reason to tremble in the presence of the holy prophet when he pleads for judgment, and even when our zeal for justice leads us to condemn

another, we may only require to listen to the voice of the Eternal Truth to hear the words pronounced in our internal ear—"Thou art the man."

But the spiritual sense reveals the origin both of the evil prohibited by the law, and of the intention condemned by the gospel.

Marriage is at once an effect and a type of the heavenly marriage of goodness and truth, or of love and faith. In this marriage the man represents truth and the wife good. To violate the good which any truth of religion teaches is the spiritual evil which David's first sin represented. But as his first sin led to the second, so does the violation of good lead to the falsification and destruction of its truth. When we have done violence to any good of religion, its truth rises up in our thoughts, and haunts us with visions of a coming judgment. It is Uriah whom we have spoiled of his best treasure—the poor man, whose ewe lamb we have torn from his bosom, and dressed to satisfy our wandering lusts and depraved appetites. Our first endeavour is to draw the truth over to the evil side; but it consents not, and lies like sin at our door, filling us with alarm and apprehension. But when the truth will not consent, it must be made to yield; and so it is perverted and falsified, and thus practically destroyed. This is the history of every spiritual-moral declension. First the will corrupts the good, and then the understanding falsifies and destroys the truth. The falsification and consequent practical destruction of the truth is especially represented by the second criminal act of David. For Nathan lays peculiar stress on the



fact, not simply that David had slain Uriah, but that he had slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Moab and Ammon were the two sons of Lot by his daughters, and represented, as the Moabites and Ammonites did after them, the profaning of goodness and truth. We are spiritually guilty of David's crime in killing Uriah, when we put such a false construction upon any truth as to destroy its real meaning and practical utility, and so remove it as an obstacle to selfish or sensual indulgence.

When the reproving voice of truth is hushed into silence, the troubled mind finds peace; but it is the peace which is no peace—the stillness of corruption, the calm of spiritual deadness. Happy is it if the conscience, though silenced, is not seared. It may yet be awakened by the voice of the Eternal Truth, speaking to it through its sense of right. So it was with David. When the grave had closed over Uriah, and Bath-sheba was in the king's palace, David sat upon the throne of judgment, with a conscience stifled, if not at rest. But when the Lord's prophet turned upon the guilty judge the sword of justice, which he had raised over one less guilty than himself, it entered into his soul, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and proving a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Smitten with a sense of sin, he sat, a conscience-stricken and a humbled man, uttering before the man of God, and in the presence of his assembled court, the unreserved confession, "I have sinned against the Lord."

David's ready confession received as ready a for-

giveness: "Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

It may seem at variance with strict justice that so serious a sin should have met with so ready a forgiveness. But it is in strict accordance with the Scripture law upon the subject. In both Testaments pardon is promised on repentance. If David's repentance was sincere, his sin could not consistently remain unpardoned. At the same time we are to reflect, that David's punishment, repentance, and forgiveness, were natural and temporal, while those of the Christian are spiritual and eternal. Christian forgiveness can only, therefore, be secured by Christian repentance.

But while repentance never fails to receive forgiveness, sin, once committed, entails certain consequences on him who commits it. Although David's life was spared, he did not escape unscathed. Having slain Uriah with the sword, the sword was never to depart from his house; having divided the house of another, his own house was to be divided; having taken his neighbour's wife, his own wives were to be given to his neighbour; having sinned secretly, he was to be punished in kind openly; and having given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that was born to him was to die.

The law of retaliation, which forms the ground of this judgment, had its origin in the law of equity—"Do to others as ye would that others should do to you." In heaven, and among the heavenly minded, this law is only known as the rule for measuring out good to one another; but when it descends into the lower world,

and among natural men in whom heavenly order is inverted, it becomes the rule for measuring out evil,—“An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” Still it is the same divine law, being the law of providence in the one case, and the law of permission in the other. When God permits the employment of the law of retaliation, it is to teach us that every evil has within itself its own punishment, and that every evil act ultimately returns on the head of him who commits it. In the present instance we are instructed that, even when sins have been confessed and forgiven, the evil condition of mind in which they have originated cannot be corrected, and the mind restored to a right state, without conflict with the very evils from which our sins have proceeded. We are not to suppose that repentance and forgiveness wipe our sins at once and for ever away. Repentance turns our faces Zionwards; but in our journey to the holy city we have to encounter the very evils that have led us away from its gates; and unless we overcome them, we can never gain that place of security and peace. The life of the spiritual man is one of conflict; the sword never departs from his house; the foes against whom he has to contend are those of his own household—the evils of his own heart; the sin he has committed in secret is to return upon him openly, and the fruit of sin itself is to die.

We may humbly trust that the purer principles of Christianity and the grace of its divine Author will preserve us from sinning after the similitude of David's transgression. Yet the contemplation of his trans-

gression is profitable. We inherit the same nature, and are of like passions, and are exposed to the same temptations, as the Israelitish king. Do we not, then, need to regard his sin as a warning? But we need to be warned against more than the deeds themselves which he committed. Impurity of thought and intention is the unclean sin in its beginning, and to cherish is to commit. Anger and revenge are more than the seeds of murder: they are the branches of the evil tree that bears the deadly fruit. These we have to learn, from David's double crime, to shun. But we may learn from it to look still deeper into our hearts and minds. We may see both evils in their first origin in the violation of any spiritual principle of good whatever, and in perverting the truth that teaches, guards, and defends it. Knowing that every part of the Holy Word is divinely inspired, and is given for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, let us remember the end for which it is given,—that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

## SERMON XXI.

### THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

“Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.”—JOHN v. 2-9.

THERE are two kinds of influx from God into the human mind, one direct, the other indirect. These have marked two different and very distinct periods in the spiritual history of our race. Prior to the Lord's coming into the world, the emanating sphere of his love and wisdom passed through heaven before it reached, or could reach, the perceptive faculties of the human

mind; but, since the incarnation, that sphere proceeds directly from the Lord, in his humanity, into every faculty and degree of man's nature. This is one of the most important benefits which we have derived from God's manifestation in the flesh. But the greater blessing did not supersede the less. The two kinds of influx which existed successively now exist simultaneously. The spirit of love and truth, while it flows into the human mind immediately from the Lord himself, flows also into the mind mediately through the angelic heaven. Under the dispensation of the Gospel, the Lord truly gives a double portion of his Spirit, and all who sincerely ask and seek are freely and liberally supplied.

These two kinds of influx were represented and, indeed, exemplified in the two miracles which form the subject of our text, though the actual performance of only one miracle is recorded. The economy of salvation that existed under the Old Testament dispensation was represented by the means and manner in which the impotent folk were healed at the pool of Bethesda. The waters of the sacred pool were moved into health-giving activity by the disturbing power of the descending angel, so that he who first stepped in after the troubling of the water was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. But the economy of salvation introduced by the incarnation, and existing under the Gospel dispensation, was represented by the manner of the cure of the man who had made so many unsuccessful attempts to reach the pool when the water was troubled. This man was cured by Jesus himself in

person, who restored him at once to health by his own omnipotent word. Both cures were performed by the same divine power; but, in the one case, that power operated indirectly, in the other, it operated directly. The one was feeble, as well as indirect; the other was not only direct, but powerful. Thus was the divine power of salvation brought near to us by the Lord's advent; and such was the virtue that proceeded from the person of the Lord, that not only those whom he touched, but even those who believingly touched but the hem of his garment, were instantly cured of the most hopeless diseases.

While these two miracles represented the two kinds of influx as they existed successively, and now exist simultaneously, in the church, they are also types of these two kinds, or modes, of the divine operation as they take place in the minds of the regenerate. Every divine work is like itself in its particular and in its general operations. The individual passes through states analogous to those which the race has experienced. The Lord and his angels are constantly present with us, and operating upon us; but the spiritual work effected in the mind through the agency of angels is distinct from that which is effected immediately by the Lord himself. Mediate influx, which comes through the angels, and which, in its widest extent, includes all finite agencies, is chiefly instrumental in providing the more outward means of salvation; while that which comes immediately from the Lord himself, enters more into the interior states of the mind, communicating a spiritual vitality to that which his finite agencies

supply. As these two kinds of saving operation are more immediately interesting to us, and may be made more edifying when viewed in reference to personal experience and individual regeneration, we propose to consider the text in its personal and practical application to ourselves.

What, then, is the pool whose Hebrew name is so expressive of its beneficent character—this “house of mercy,” to which multitudes of the afflicted flock to seek the benefit of its healing waters? The pool of Bethesda is the Word of God, whose truths are the waters in which the spiritually afflicted, who seek for saving health, find a cure for their various maladies.

And where is this pool, around which are gathered the great multitude of impotent folk? We possess it in the book we call the Bible. There we can betake ourselves at all times for instruction and refreshment; but in seasons of sickness, distress, and trial, we find it more especially a house of mercy, where the earnest seeker finds comfort and strength.

But to derive due benefit from the Word of God as a means of saving health, we must not only possess and read it as a book, but we must inwardly receive and cling to it as a divine revelation, and as a message of mercy to afflicted and perishing sinners. The Word has no power essentially to benefit us, except so far as its truths find a believing and loving reception in our own hearts and minds. There must the waters be gathered together, through which health and strength come to our souls. The pool of Bethesda, thus individualized, consists of all the truths which any of us have acquired



by instruction and study, and treasured up in the memory as knowledge. Truth, like water, has a quality and state according to the place and condition in which it is found. In the heart the water of life is a fountain, in the intellect it is a stream, in the memory it is a pool. The Word describes its own states in its recipients by these symbols. It is a fountain in the heart, because there it springs up into everlasting life; in the intellect it is a stream, for there it flows out as intelligence, to enrich and gladden the mind; in the memory it is a pool, because there its truths are gathered together in a body, as "the depths are laid up in store-houses," and lie in a state of comparative inaction. Truths in the memory, like waters in a pool, may become stagnant from inaction, and impure from the mingling with them of our own corruptions. On the other hand, truths may be preserved pure, or be restored to purity, by the spirit of truth coming down into them through the higher affections of the mind, and moving them into activity, and applying them to the purposes of the spiritual life. The pool of Bethesda, therefore, while its waters lay motionless, and incapable of curing any of the numerous objects who had come to seek for health, is expressively symbolical of the truth while it remains in the mind as knowledge, without the life of spiritual love, and without being employed to remove our spiritual infirmities, and restore us to spiritual health and strength.

Having seen what is represented by the pool of Bethesda, let us turn our attention to the great multi-

tude of impotent folk that lie waiting for the moving of the waters.

If the pool itself is in the mind, there also must we look for the multitude of blind, halt, withered, that wait in expectation of a cure. And since, in the Word, persons are the types of principles, we may discern in the multitude of sick persons the multitude of disordered principles that exist in every unregenerate, and more or less in every partially regenerated mind. We may see in the blind the ignorance that hinders and the errors that pervert our intellectual perception of truth and goodness; in the halt we may see the unequal manifestation of these principles in the life; and in the withered we may see the depravity of all or some of the powers of active life in the mind, which produces general or partial incapacity for voluntary virtuous action. Every one of us is thus infirm by nature, more or less confirmed or aggravated by practice. From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness in us. The natural mind, by birth, is wholly opposed to the spiritual, although the opposition does not come into full play till the passions have come to their full strength. Then do we find that evil lurks in every thought and feeling; and the very *sensualia*, those avenues to the soul, are, like the five porches, filled with a multitude of concupiscences that make them convey, to speak according to appearance, unclean and false impressions to the mind, but, really, according to whose disordered state the mind acts. But we are not to overlook the fact that the scene presented at the sheep-

gate represents the condition of one who has discovered his spiritual infirmities, and, actuated by a desire to have them removed, has entered the porch of introductory knowledge, and has applied his mind to the truths which he has acquired from the divine Word, and is waiting patiently and prayerfully for that quickening influence which is to make them the active and efficacious means of his spiritual restoration.

But why had those sick folk to wait for the moving of the water? Why did the angel descend only at a certain season into the pool, to give it the power of imparting health? The reason has to be sought in our own experience. The Lord has no set or limited times for descending with his blessings to mankind. With him this is always the day of salvation. While *we* seem to wait for grace, *he* is actually waiting to be gracious. Our state to receive is his time to give. And those angelic ministers of his who wait around his throne, and delight to do his pleasure, are ever ready to descend on their mission of love to their suffering kindred upon earth. But, notwithstanding the Lord's willingness to give, and the angels' readiness to do us service, we know by experience how long a period often intervenes between our first desire to receive and the actual reception of the gift. When we have discovered an infirmity, and have become earnestly desirous to have it removed, we not unfrequently have to wait long before the desired deliverance comes. Many prayers and many efforts are needful for its removal. The reason of this is not difficult to discover. The desire is a newly conceived

affection, the infirmity is an ingenerate lust or a confirmed habit. The period of our waiting and the season of our deliverance are determined by the relative strength of the desire and the infirmity. The angel who comes down to move the water comes through our own desire for deliverance.

The angel who brings us deliverance is in the desire, which is an affection of the inner man; but he cannot be the active instrument of removing the infirmity, which is an evil of the outer man, till he can descend in that desire, and inspire our knowledge with a living spiritual affection, changing the truths of a dead into those of a living faith. In the abstract or impersonal sense, this spiritual affection is itself the angel; and it is only when this angelic principle of the inner man descends, at that certain season which our own state determines, into the truths which have been laid up in the outer man, that a saving power can be imparted to them. Waiting for spiritual blessings arises, therefore, from the presence in the mind of two opposite elements, desire to obtain and unfitness to receive. It is our unpreparedness to receive divine blessings, even when we earnestly desire them, that for a time leaves our prayers unanswered and our efforts unfruitful. Yet, if the desire is sincere, and the effort sustained, success will come at last. We may wait, and wait long, without any sign of coming deliverance; but if we wait patiently, and continue faithful, the season will come when the angel will descend into the pool and trouble the water, and give it the power to heal whatsoever disease we have. The

vital activity imparted to the truths of the natural mind is the real, because the practical, commencement of the new life. It is the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters—the first vital activity of divine life in the thoughts of the heart, bringing the chaotic mass into cosmical order and beauty. There is this difference, indeed, between the human mind as it is now and as it was when this sublime imagery was first employed to describe its state. The mind is now not so much a chaos as a ruin; its elements do not sleep in the stillness of undistinguished confusion, but surge up in turbulent commotion. To use another figure more formally allied to our subject, the mind is not now simply ignorant, but diseased; and the Lord comes to it, not as a teacher only, but as a physician. But what cause of thankfulness have we, that where the disease has existed there also has the remedy been provided. Wherever man has multiplied disorder and disease, God has provided a pool of Bethesda, and sent his angel to move its waters, and make them fit for imparting health.

But another circumstance in this interesting statement here presents itself. When the angel had moved the waters, the first only that stepped in was made whole. When we read of this singular fact, we are almost constrained to inquire, why there was such a seeming parsimony in the dispensing of so great a gift. Why had an event so great as the descent of an angel a result so small as the healing of a single person? Might not the whole multitude of impotent folk have plunged into the pool, and risen from its waters re-

stored to the blessing of health? The greater miracle would have been as easy to Omnipotence as the less. But this would not have accomplished the purpose of infinite wisdom. All these things happened unto the typical people for ensamples, and are written for our admonition. In this singular, and evidently divinely ordered circumstance, there lies hidden an important and instructive truth. Our spiritual infirmities are not removed at once, but by degrees. The whole multitude of our evils are not wiped away by a single act of grace through a single act of faith. Our evils are removed, as the infirm persons at the pool of Bethesda were cured, one by one. This law of healing is as merciful as it is wise. Were the whole of our evils to be excited into equal activity at once, they would overwhelm and destroy us. One evil is enough, and not unfrequently more than enough, for us to cope with at a time. All our evils have, indeed, a connection with each other, and all participate in every inward motive and every outward act; but there is always one that forms the head and front of our offending. That one must for the time be the single object of our attention, and for the removal of which we must employ the whole of our energies. It is only by concentrating the full force of our minds on that one infirmity that its removal can be effected. Whether the subject of that infirmity be the intellect or the will, the temper or the life, it is only by making it the great, if not the sole object of our attention and our efforts, that it can be the first that steps into the pool, and be cured of whatsoever disease it hath.

But amongst the great multitude lying waiting at the pool of Bethesda, there is one whose case is invested with peculiar interest, both from the circumstances of the case itself, and the manner of his cure. Thirty and eight years had this man borne his infirmity. He had repeatedly attempted, and as often failed, to reach the pool when the waters were troubled, yet there he lay in patient expectation of a cure. Jesus, the heavenly physician, had come to visit the great lazaretto. His eye, from which nothing was hid, singled out this impotent man as, it would seem, the poorest, the most afflicted, and the most helpless of the whole of the vast multitude of sufferers. Addressing him in the tone of that tender compassion which the man of sorrows felt for the suffering, he said unto him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Regarding Jesus simply as a benevolent visitor who felt a kind and sympathizing interest in his case, the impotent man answered, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another steppeth down before me." The poor cataleptic knew not at the moment that in Jesus he at last had found the MAN he had so long needed and vainly desired—yea, the Divine Man in whom is all help; he knew not that in Jesus he had found the angel for whose visit he was so anxiously waiting—yea, the angel of the new covenant, better than that cemented by the law of ordinances; he knew not that in Jesus he had found the true Bethesda—yea, the fountain which Jehovah had opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness. But when Jesus

had said unto him, "I say unto thee arise, and take up thy bed, and walk," and the poor cataleptic started at once from decrepitude and feebleness into the freshness and vigour of health, then did he know, by evidence more convincing than the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear—by the most convincing of all evidence, that of experience—that Jesus possessed in himself all power, all agencies, all means,—that he was the Being in whom all fullness dwells.

The case of this impotent man is not without its direct spiritual lesson to us. To derive from it the practical instruction it contains we have to inquire, What spiritual infirmity in us does his natural infirmity represent? It represents that infirmity of all infirmities, our corrupt ruling love, and the sin that doth so easily beset us. This love is the root of all our spiritual disorder, disease, and impotence—the deepest seated, the most difficult to reach, and the last to be removed of all the evils that afflict us. This love, as the thirty-eight years' duration of the poor man's malady implies, contains in itself the conjunction of evil and falsity, and has the continued consent of the will and understanding. It forms our very selfhood. The new will that dwells above this tenacious selfhood may have to struggle long and manfully before it shake itself free from its dead and debilitating weight. And, indeed, as this love is the soul and centre of all the others, it cannot be cast out till its derived and subordinate lusts are weakened or overcome; as the general of an army or the ruler of a people cannot be conquered but by gradually weakening the forces on whose support his



power depends. The particular and lesser evils must gradually, one by one, give way, before the ruling evil can be overcome. The least afflicted and enfeebled of the multitude were the first to reach the pool, while those who laboured under greater infirmities were among the last to receive a cure. So is it ever in the spiritual experience of the faithful. But let them receive comfort and encouragement from the promise which this man's deliverance holds out to those who persevere, that the Lord will give the aids that their varying states require, and will bring final and complete deliverance when they are ready to receive it.

Such are the progress and completion of regeneration as described in this part of the gospel history. It is a gradual work, and one of long duration. And how can it be otherwise? If all our faculties are diseased, and have become infirm or impotent, they cannot all be restored to health and strength but by a long course of curative action. Although the Lord's cures were, many of them, instantaneous, those cures, individually, did not represent the removal of the whole of a man's evils, but only of one. Besides, quickness in relation to time means certainty in relation to state. So that instantaneous cures, or even instantaneous pardon, carry only the idea of certainty, when translated into the true language of the church and of heaven. But although the removal of our evils is gradual and difficult, yet, if bodily health is worth all the means which the diseased so eagerly employ to procure it, how much more the health of the soul! How terrible spiritual disease is, and how precious

spiritual health, we may learn from the Word, where these opposite states are depicted by figures similar to the facts of our text. "There is no soundness in my flesh, there is no rest in my bones because of my sin. I am feeble and sore broken; my heart panteth, my strength faileth: as for the light of mine eyes it is gone. I am ready to halt, I am troubled, I am greatly bowed down." If a sense of such a state of disease and infirmity leads us earnestly to betake ourselves to the Word as our instructor, and to the Lord as our physician, we shall obtain health of mind, with its accompanying delights and uses. Like the impotent man, we shall be able, when restored, joyfully to take up our bed and walk. The comforting doctrine of resignation, on which we have reposed, and that sustained us in our affliction, will become the means of a perpetual and grateful remembrance of what the Lord has done for our soul. It will be raised into a higher place in our affections. Resignation will be exalted into gratitude, and gratitude will be manifested in a life of devoted service to Him from whom we have received a cure. We will thus both take up our bed and walk. And while we "walk" in the way of a loving and faithful obedience to the divine will, our song will be, "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 healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy soul from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

When such a state as this is realized, may it not be said, "On the same day was the Sabbath?" That holy day on which the Lord performed so many miracles was a suitable figure of the "rest" into which his beneficent cures introduced those who had laboured under painful diseases. Still more fitting was it as the type of the spiritual rest which succeeds the labours of temptation, by which evil and sin, with their attendant anxieties and miseries, are removed. This state of rest is the Sabbath of the soul, and gives a foretaste of the blessedness of heaven, where there ever remaineth the rest of an eternal Sabbath for the people of God.

## SERMON XXII.

### REDEMPTION.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”—REVELATION v. 9.

REDEMPTION is a subject in which every man, who is convinced of his immortality and conscious of his sinfulness, must feel a deep and solemn interest. When the fall had introduced sin into the world, redemption alone could make salvation possible. Had not the Lord come into the world, and wrought out deliverance for his people, mankind long ere now had sunk into a state of hopeless corruption and atheism, supposing the race could have continued to exist at all, when the great end of their existence had been frustrated. Well, therefore, may we join the heavenly host and say, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

In treating of this subject from the present text, I

shall arrange my observations under three general heads: I shall consider the NATURE, the MEANS, and the EXTENT of redemption.

I. In the first place, then, we are to consider the NATURE of redemption, "Thou hast redeemed us to God."

This branch of the subject may be considered to include three points of inquiry: BY whom were we redeemed? FROM whom? TO whom?

1. As to the first, all Christians acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer. But who was Jesus Christ? In the Old Testament Jehovah is declared to be the Redeemer of his people, besides whom there is no Saviour. If, therefore, Jesus was the Redeemer and Saviour of men, there is no other legitimate conclusion than that Jesus was Jehovah.

There is, however, a distinction in our text between God and the Lamb. This is a distinction between divinity and humanity. The humanity, as exercising the power of the indwelling divinity,—the Son, as exercising the power of the Father that dwelt within him, was the Redeemer; and hence the saints in heaven address the Lamb, saying, "THOU hast redeemed us." The humanity was the Redeemer. But by the humanity we are to understand the WORD MADE FLESH; for the Lord came into the world as Divine Truth. Divine Truth was the Word by which the world was created, and by which it was redeemed.

2. Seeing, then, that God, who created the world by his Word, redeemed it by that Word made flesh, our next inquiry is, FROM whom were we redeemed? This

point is implied, though not expressed, in the passage before us.

It is generally supposed that the Lord came into the world to appease the wrath of God, or at least to satisfy his justice, by suffering the penalty which the law had awarded to sin. It is thus virtually assumed that he came to redeem them FROM God as well as TO God.

The Lord came to redeem mankind from the preponderance of the power of hell. Thus the devil, or Satan, was the enemy from whose dominion man was delivered.

But what, it may be inquired, was the preponderance of the power of hell, deliverance from which constituted the work of human redemption?

While in the present world, man is in the midst between heaven and hell. By the equilibrium or balance of these two gigantic powers man is preserved in possession of spiritual liberty, or free-will, by which he is able to choose between good and evil, and to turn either to heaven or to hell. So long as this equilibrium is preserved, the freedom of the human will is maintained, and salvation is possible to all men. But when the power of hell comes to preponderate over the power of heaven, and the power of evil over the power of good, spiritual liberty is infringed, and man becomes more or less the involuntary though devoted captive of Satan.

It was this state of spiritual bondage which rendered the redemption of mankind necessary. At the period of the incarnation, not only were men mentally

subject to the power of evil spirits, but many were even physically possessed by them. In the demoniacal possessions recorded in the gospel, we see the ultimate effect of Satanic domination in the overthrow of human liberty and rationality. And although these were but individual instances, there is every reason to conclude that, had not the Lord come into the world, the spiritual pestilence would have spread, till the whole race had become infected by it, when mankind would have perished as a consequence.

To remove the excess of that diabolic power and influence by which the freedom of the human will had been infringed, and was on the eve of being destroyed, was the immediate purpose of the Lord's incarnation. It was not to annihilate that power that the Lord came into the world; for this would have been as fatal to human freedom as its complete ascendancy. For, in his present state, man cannot exist and act as a free agent, without connection both with the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. It was not, therefore, the purpose of redemption to destroy the power of hell, but to reduce it within such limits as were necessary for the unfettered exercise of the human faculties: it was to reduce its power to an equality with that of heaven, and thereby restore the balance of the spiritual powers of good and evil in the universe. And this was effected, not only in general, but in particular: every evil and false principle in hell became balanced by its opposite good and truth in heaven. By this means the regeneration and consequent salvation of man is perfectly and perpetually provided for, since

no evil and falsity can now be injected into the human mind from below, where the opposite good and truth are not present with equal power from above; so that man is preserved in the most perfect freedom of choice during every moment of his existence and every exercise of his faculties.

In agreement with this view of the nature of redemption, the Scriptures represent mankind, previous to the Lord's advent, as being in a state of bondage, and their redemption is described as a work of deliverance. It would be impossible to cite even a small portion of the passages in which this subject is treated of; but the nature of their testimony may be gathered from a few.

The first promise which was given of the Redeemer and redemption clearly presents this view of the subject. "I will put enmity," saith the Lord to the tempter, "between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Enmity and conflict between the enslaver and Redeemer of mankind form, therefore, the subject of this promise; and human redemption is plainly described as resulting from the Lord's victory over the tempter of man and of himself; the dominion of evil and the preponderance of the power of hell being thereby removed, which is the bruising of the head of the serpent.

Throughout the prophets the people are spoken of as robbed and spoiled, being captives, having sold themselves for nought, made a covenant with hell, and an agreement with death. And the Lord promised to



vindicate and deliver them, to redeem them without money, and to be the plague of death and the destruction of hell.

In the New Testament, the nature of redemption, as consisting in deliverance from the power of our enemies, is even more plainly taught. Zecharias speaks of the Redeemer and redemption in these words,—“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us; that he would grant unto us that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life,” (Luke i. 67.) It may be supposed that the father of John is only expressing the common opinion of the Jews, that the Messiah would deliver them from the Roman yoke; but when we reflect that he was “filled with the Holy Ghost,” we cannot for a moment entertain this supposition, since the Spirit of God could never dictate a hope that was to be so signally disappointed.

The same truth is declared in the second chapter of Hebrews,—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” And John says,—“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

In these instances there is an obvious recognition of the fact that Satan, or the kingdom of darkness, had acquired dominion over mankind, and that the Lord's immediate object in coming into the world was to deprive hell of its ascendancy, and restore his own spiritual kingdom upon earth.

The nature of redemption, as consisting in the deliverance of mankind from the power of their spiritual enemies, is strikingly illustrated in that of the redemption of Israel from bondage in Egypt, which was a real type of the great work which our Lord accomplished in the flesh. The redemption of Israel consisted simply in their deliverance from a state of bondage, and their restoration to a state of freedom. The redemption of the human race was of the same nature: it was simply a deliverance of mankind from the power or captivity of hell, and their restoration to a state of liberty.

But "redemption" in the New Testament includes the idea of ransom, which is sometimes so expressed; as where the Lord (Matt. xx. 28) says,—“The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many;” and where Paul also has said (Rom. vi. 20),—“Ye are bought with a price.” Although redemption is here called a ransom and a purchase, it is not said from whom mankind were ransomed, or to whom their price was paid. To ascertain the meaning and force of these declarations, we have only to examine the Scriptures, where such language occurs. Moses, in his song (Exod. xv. 16), calls the redemption of Israel a purchase. “By the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone, till thy people

pass over, O Lord, which thou hast purchased." In Deuteronomy xxxii. he thus reproaches the ingratitude of Israel,—“Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father that hath bought thee?” Jehovah, by the prophet Isaiah (xliii. 3) says,—“I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.” And in the thirteenth chapter of Hosea the same language is employed,—“I will ransom them from the power of the grave (or hell); I will redeem them from death.”

In all these passages Jehovah is declared to be the ransomer and purchaser of his people. And what is thus ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament is ascribed to Jesus in the New. It was because Jesus was Jehovah that he could ransom the human race from that greater than Egyptian bondage to which they had become subject. He did not redeem mankind by paying an equivalent for their pardon, but by providing out of the riches of his mercy and grace the means of their redemption and salvation. They had sold themselves for nought, and they were redeemed without money.

3. As the Scriptures represent redemption as a deliverance FROM the enemy, so do they represent it as a restoration TO God. “Thou hast redeemed us TO God.” “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” The Lord’s great purpose was to draw all men unto him; and in order that he might do this, he first delivered them, by redemption, from bondage, and restored them to a state of liberty, that they might be able freely to choose whom they would serve, and

receive and reciprocate the divine operations for effecting their salvation.

II. We now come, in the second place, to consider the MEANS by which this redemption was effected. "Thou hast redeemed us to God BY THY BLOOD."

1. The blood of the Lord, in a natural sense, means his sufferings and death.

The sufferings of the Lord, both during his life and in his death, are commonly supposed to have been caused by God the Father pouring out upon him, as man's substitute, the fierceness of his wrath, and the severity of his justice, which are supposed by that means to have been appeased and satisfied. But the Lord's sufferings had a widely different origin, and were endured for a far different end. The Lord's sufferings came not from God, but from the devil, and were endured, not to appease divine wrath, but to overcome diabolic power. The sufferings of the Lord arose from his conflicts with the powers of darkness—from the temptations he endured as the Son of man, and the Redeemer of the world. They were the bruises of his heel by the serpent, whose head he came to bruise—whose dominion he came to destroy. The Lord's temptations were a means of effecting human redemption, because they were a means without which the powers of darkness could not have been overcome. It was through man's nature that hell had obtained dominion over him, and it was only through his nature that its dominion could be destroyed. It was for this reason that the Lord was born into the world as an infant, and passed through the ordinary stage of

human existence. Into his brief life were crowded the experience and sufferings of the whole human race, from the moment that sin first entered into the world, to the moment that the Lord died upon the cross. In his infancy the Lord was tempted to those evils, and by those hells, which had arisen in the infancy of the world, or in the first church; and as he advanced in life, he was tempted to evils and by hells in the order in which they had successively arisen, and simultaneously as well as successively. He trod, through its whole length and breadth, the path of human declension, not as a sinner, but as a Saviour, binding up by every triumph in temptation the breach of his people, and healing the stroke of their wound.

2. But the Lord's blood comprehends more in its meaning than his sufferings and death, and redemption had another and higher means for its accomplishment. While redemption required a human instrument, it required a divine power; while it required a suffering humanity, it required an omnipotent divinity. There is no power or merit in mere suffering; it is only useful as it calls into action the powers and virtues of the sufferer. The Lord's sufferings were the means of redemption, because they were the occasions of his divine power being manifested in such a way as was required for man's deliverance. Although it was by the medium of his suffering humanity, it was by the power of his indwelling divinity that redemption was accomplished. The Lord was manifested as divine truth: he was the Word made flesh. And this divine truth is spiritually meant by his blood. The blood, as

the Scriptures testify, is the life or soul of the flesh. The blood of the Lord Jesus was the life of his humanity. It is the life from which all men spiritually live:—"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." It is the life from which they have all spiritual power; as Michael and his angels overcame the dragon and his angels by the blood of the Lamb. It is that from which they have all spiritual purification;—for the saints wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Lord was the divine truth itself—the Word made flesh. The Word or wisdom of God was the divine power by which all things had been created. And it was to restore the order that had been introduced into creation, but which evil had destroyed, that the Word became incarnate. But what power could effect this but that of the Most High, by his divine truth, which is the origin and support of all order? By the assumption and glorification of human nature the Lord restored order, and set limits to disorder, throughout his whole spiritual dominions, and became a Redeemer and Saviour to eternity.

III. We now proceed, thirdly, to consider the **EXTENT** of redemption: "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood **OUT OF EVERY KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE, AND NATION.**"

1. When the angels announced to the shepherds the birth of the Saviour, they declared it to be "good tidings of great joy, which should be to **ALL** people." No truth, indeed, seems to be more plainly stated in the Scriptures than this, that the great work of redemp-

tion included the whole human race. "God so loved **THE WORLD**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **WHOSOEVER** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Christ tasted death for **EVERY** man;" and so "God will have **ALL** men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

The idea that only a part of the human race was redeemed is at variance, not only with the express declarations of Scripture, but with every just conception of the divine attributes, with the purpose of God in creation, and with the nature of redemption itself. God is love; and love could not but create men for happiness; and he whose tender mercies are over all his works could not leave any to perish without redemption and the means of salvation.

The opinion that redemption was a limited work is grounded in an entire misapprehension of what redemption really was. If the nature of that divine work were understood, it would be seen to be impossible that redemption could be a limited work. Redemption, we have seen, consisted in the subjugation of the power of hell. Till all hell was conquered, no individual of the human race was redeemed; when all hell was conquered, no individual remained unredeemed. The redemption of one man was therefore the redemption of all men. And not only of all men in this world, but of all men in all worlds. For when the Lord took upon him the nature of man, he took upon him the nature of every man in the wide universe; he took human nature, which comprehended in it the nature of man wherever man exists. Although, there-

fore, the Lord assumed human nature in our world, where it is in its lowest condition, and had fallen into its most degraded state, by which he was enabled to bring himself down by accommodation to the lowest necessities of humanity, and descend to the lowest depths of Satan, and thereby become a Saviour who could save unto the uttermost, yet the benefits of his divine work extended over the whole universe, and became the means of connecting his creation in all worlds with himself. Such was the extent of the divine work of human redemption. Such was its extent considered as a general work.

2. But redemption is a particular as well as a general work; and as a particular work it is not necessarily thus unlimited.

Inattention to the distinction between general and particular redemption has been the cause of that confusion of ideas, and consequent mistaken opinion, which prevail respecting the extent of this divine work. Because all are not saved, many conclude that therefore all cannot have been redeemed. But when the distinction between general and particular redemption is understood, this conclusion is seen to be entirely fallacious. Redemption as a general work consisted, we have seen, in the deliverance of the entire human race from the bondage of hell, and their restoration to a state of freedom. Particular redemption consists in their deliverance individually from the bondage of sin, and their restoration to a state of holiness.

There is this important difference between general



and particular redemption : the Lord effected general redemption by himself alone, not only without man's knowledge and consent, but it may have been even against his will. Particular redemption, on the other hand, can only be effected by man's knowledge and consent, and during his co-operation. In the Lord's great work of human redemption, it is emphatically declared, that "of the people there was none with him;" that "his own arm brought salvation unto him." He stood alone between mankind and the whole powers of darkness, and wrought out for them a redemption in which they themselves had no active part. But in the work of particular redemption, man has to be "a worker together with God, to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The Lord, therefore, wrought his first redemption FOR man; the second redemption he works IN him. General redemption only altered man's outward condition, the second changes his spiritual state. The one delivered him from his enemies; the other saves him from his sins.

The difference between general and particular redemption may be illustrated by the case of the Israelites, which has already been introduced, to show the nature of that divine work.

The deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt made them the subjects of a general redemption. To mark the completeness of their deliverance, as a fit type of the Lord's redemption of mankind, it was miraculously provided that not one should be sick or weak in the congregation; and that, in the expres-

sive language of inspiration, not a hoof should be left behind. No deliverance, therefore, could be more complete.

But although all were brought up out of Egypt, all were not introduced into Canaan. In the wilderness, which lay between the furnace of iron and the land of milk and honey, many perished, as the victims of their own wilful disobedience.

Deliverance from Egypt secured to the Israelites no positive blessing but that of freedom. They were delivered from their enemies, but they were not delivered from their corruptions. They had ceased to be the bondmen of Pharaoh, but they had yet to learn to become the willing and obedient subjects of the Lord. They had been delivered from Egypt by the power of God alone, and independent of their own exertions, but they could only be introduced into their Canaan of rest by their own active obedience and patient perseverance in well-doing.

The redemption which our Lord accomplished in the world effected for mankind spiritually what deliverance from Egypt effected for the children of Israel naturally. It brought them out of a state of spiritual servitude into a state of spiritual liberty, and provided them with the power of freely turning to their Redeemer, and following him in the regeneration. But there it left them, to choose whom they would serve; and with themselves rests the decision, whether they will turn back to a state of spiritual and eternal captivity, or improve that freedom which the Lord has secured for them, and of which nothing can deprive them but their

own free and deliberate act. As numbers of the Israelites who were redeemed from Egypt died in the wilderness, so may many perish for whom Christ died.

The subject we have now been considering suggests these momentous inquiries: In what condition are we placed by redemption? and what must we do to realize its advantages?

The Lord Jesus Christ has done for mankind what they were utterly unable to do for themselves. He has delivered them from the overwhelming power of diabolical domination, and secured to them the blessings of spiritual liberty. He has destroyed the veil that was spread over all nations, and shed abroad the long-intercepted light of truth from heaven. He has swallowed up death in victory, and thereby given us power to become more than conquerors. He has done all that was necessary, and even all that was possible, towards securing our salvation and spiritual happiness; and has left these unsecured, only because they did not depend upon himself alone, but upon our willingness to be saved and made happy. He has secured to us the power freely to will and to do our part of the work, on the performance of which the salvation of our souls depends. Having been delivered from the power of the hell that is without us, we can now, by repentance and obedience, be delivered from the hell which is within us—from the corruption and bondage of our own evil loves and carnal appetites. Omnipotence itself cannot make man happy without making him holy; nor can Omnipotence make him holy but by a divine work effected in the heart of man during a voluntary

surrender of his own will to the will of the Lord, and by a persevering use of divine means. All the means of salvation are now provided, and can be freely and successfully employed. All outward obstructions being removed, we can now freely turn our faces Zionwards. And if we are wise to do so, and continue faithful to him who has been merciful to us, we shall realize his divine promise, "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."



## ERRATA.

- Page 3, line 16, for *under* read *in*.  
,, 15, line 22, for *would* read *should*.  
,, 42, line 19, for *will* read *shall*.  
,, 43, line 25, for *will* read *shall*.  
,, 144, line 17, for *unable* read *enabled*.  
,, 181, line 28, for *would* read *should*.















