

*10. 11. 1818*

**SERMONS**

ON THE

**CALL AND DELIVERANCE**

OF THE

**CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT,**

AND ON SEVERAL OF

*THE MORE IMPORTANT CIRCUMSTANCES*

ATTENDING THEIR

**JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS,**

TO THEIR FINAL SETTLEMENT IN

***THE LAND OF CANAAN.***

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## INTRODUCTION.



**T**HE following Discourses were composed by the Author under the fullest persuasion, and most serious conviction, that not only the particular History, which is the subject of them, but likewise all the other historical as well as prophetic parts of the Old Testament, contain in them an internal or spiritual sense, perfectly distinct from the sense of the letter, and yet veiled under it; and that whilst the sense of the letter of the Sacred Records treats only of external and natural things, such as relate to persons, places, and events of this lower world, the internal or spiritual sense treats at the same time of internal or spiritual things, such as relate primarily to JESUS CHRIST Himself, and secondarily to His kingdom in the heavens, and His true Church here upon earth. Under the influence of such a persuasion in his own mind, he was willing to enforce it also on the minds of those, for whose spiritual instruction he stands accountable before GOD, believing it to be a thing of the utmost importance for all Christians to be fully satisfied, not only concerning the authenticity and genuineness of the Sacred Scriptures, but also concerning that spirituality contained in their letter and history, by  
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which they are so eminently distinguished from all other writings whatsoever, and which alone properly constitutes them what they are so generally called —THE WORD OF GOD.

In making this avowal of his sentiments, the Author is well aware that he is at once supported and opposed by many high human authorities, which would render it difficult to decide where the truth lies, if the decision rested only on the opinions of men. But it is happy for the Christian Church that this is not the case, inasmuch as the evidence of truth, in this as in all other instances, is to be sought for, and found, not in the testimony of man, but of GOD; not in the human and fallible speculations of finite minds, but in the divine and consequently infallible attestations of the Supreme and Infinite Intelligence. To determine, therefore, in what manner the Sacred Scriptures are written, and whether they contain an internal spiritual sense distinct from the letter, or are to be understood merely according to the sense of the letter, we are not left to the uncertainty of our own vain conjectures, nor yet to the greater hazard of calculation on the conjectures of others. We may possibly tremble, whilst we hear it asserted by one learned prelate, “That the sacred penmen were, in some cases, *left wholly to themselves*; and that *their natural qualifications were sufficient* to enable them to relate things with all the accuracy they required.”\* And we may, perhaps,  
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\* See Bishop Law's Theory of Religion, quoted and sanctioned by the Bishop of Landaff in his Apology for the Bible, p. 108.



be equally concerned and surprised, to read in the works of another learned and Right Reverend Author, that "When it is said that Scripture is divinely inspired, *it is not to be understood that GOD suggested every word, or dictated every expression;*"\* and in another place, (though without saying a word of the contrary declaration of St. Paul) "We may venture to pronounce, that in no one book of the Old or New Testament, which professes to relate past occurrences, *is there a single instance of allegory.*"† We may be told again by another celebrated writer, in one line, that "The word of GOD, like His book of nature, *teems with life;*" and in the next line, we may find him darkening, if not contradicting his own position, by his own explanation of it, where he says, "*Every part thereof is animated by incident and character.*"‡ On the other hand, we may be taught by authorities equally respectable for piety, for learning, and for dignity, that the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament contain a sense "which is styled by Divines the *prophetical, evangelical, mystical, and spiritual sense.*"§ We may hear one to this purpose assert, that "The Therapeutæ (an ancient sect of the Jews) interpreted the Scriptures of the Old Testament *allegorically*, and that being wont to *seek out the spiritual meaning of the law*, they more readily embraced the Gospel,

\* See the Bishop of Lincoln's Elements of Christian Theology, part I. chap. i. p. 21.

† See Ditto, p. 69.

‡ See Sermons by the Rev. T. Gisborne, p. 174.

§ See Bishop Horne's Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms, p. 10.

pel, *than those who looked no further than the outward letter.*”\* We may read in the writings of another, that “As the historical sense of the Holy Scriptures is fetched from the signification of words, *so the spiritual from the signification of those things which are signified by the words.*”† We may, in like manner, hear a third testifying to “the *double sense of prophecy;*”‡ and a fourth to “the conduct of *the mystic allegory of the Scriptures;*” and also to “the *two-fold character of David, literal and allegorical;*”§ and a fifth to the testimony of the primitive fathers, “Who, (says he) were unexceptionable witnesses to us of this matter of fact, that *such a [spiritual] method of expounding the Psalms, built upon the practice of the Apostles in their writings and preachings, did universally prevail in the Church from the beginning.*”|| We may next consult Vitringa, Glassius, Witsius, Waterland, and other eminent writers who have discussed the subject; and yet, after all, the grand question will still remain to be asked and answered, viz. What is the testimony of GOD Himself on this important point? In other words, What do the Sacred Scriptures themselves testify concerning themselves, the manner in which they are written, and the sense in which they are to be understood?

Now the very *titles* alone of the writings under consideration,

\* See Archbishop Wake on the Catholic Epistle of St. Barnabas.

† See Bishop Hall's Works, folio edition, p. 533.

‡ See Bishop Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies.

§ See Bishop Lowth on the Hebrew Poetry, Lect. XI.

|| See Bishop Horne's Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms, p. 21.

consideration, if they be just and proper titles, appear to supply the clearest and most satisfactory answer to the above question, at least such as must needs be deemed so by those, who allow the justice and propriety of those titles. For if the writings under consideration be indeed what they are called, **SACRED SCRIPTURES**, and **THE WORD OF GOD**, then they must needs, in the very nature of them, contain a sense distinct from that of the letter, and yet involved in the letter. For the term **SACRED**, manifestly implies that they treat of *sacred* things ; and the **WORD OF GOD** as manifestly implies further, that they are His real speech and language ; and if they be the real speech and language of **GOD**, they must needs contain His Divine Will and Wisdom, just as the words of a man, when he speaks from sincerity, contain the will and the wisdom of the man. They must also contain that will and wisdom, equally in one part as in another, since it is impossible to suppose that any part of the speech of **GOD** can be without a meaning, that is to say, a Divine meaning, or a meaning expressive of His Divine Will and Wisdom in it's power and in it's fulness. If therefore there be any single part or sentence of the Divine Book, which doth not contain a Divine meaning, it is impossible it can be the inspired speech of **GOD** ; and if it be not the inspired speech of **GOD**, then it is alike impossible that it can constitute any part or portion whatsoever of His **DIVINE WORD**. When therefore the Apostle said, "*ALL Scripture*

*is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,\** his meaning must needs be, that one part of the Sacred Volume is inspired of GOD alike with another part, and therefore is alike His Divine speech and language, consequently is alike full of His Divine Will and Wisdom, and thereby alike *profitable for doctrine, &c.*

But where now shall we find, or how shall we be able to form any conception of, this Divine Will and Wisdom of GOD, thus *profitable for doctrine, &c. &c.* and contained in *all* parts of the HOLY WORD, if we look no deeper than the letter, and suppose that the sense of the letter is all that concerns us? It is true, in some cases, the sense even of the letter of the Sacred Volume expresses, in the most energetic fulness, both the Will and the Wisdom of Him who inspired it; but in how many instances is this not the case? To say nothing of the rituals of the Jewish Church, which form no inconsiderable part of the five books of Moses, commonly called the Pentateuch, what must any rational person conclude respecting the many apparently trivial, and in some cases, unjustifiable circumstances related of the three Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, if they be supposed to refer *only* to those Patriarchs, and to involve in them nothing deeper and more holy than what concerned their history? For let it be asked, (but with a holy awe) of what concern is it to us to be informed,

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\* Tim. iii. 16.

(if the literal information be all) that “*Abraham made a great feast, the same day that Isaac was weaned;*”<sup>\*</sup> and that afterwards “*he dismissed his concubine Hagar;*”<sup>†</sup> and presently that he provided a wife for his son Isaac, which latter transaction occupies the whole of the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis, and is recorded with a detail of the most minute and seemingly uninteresting particulars? What *doctrine* again, what *reproof*, what *correction*, or *instruction in righteousness*, is further to be found in what is related of Isaac’s servants “*striving about wells of water with the herdmen of Gerar?*”<sup>‡</sup> Or in Isaac himself on his death-bed “*longing for savoury meat, and commanding his son to hunt venison, that he might eat and bless him?*”<sup>§</sup> or in the artifice by which Jacob imposed upon his father, and robbed his brother of the intended blessing,<sup>||</sup> or yet in the more signal and singular artifice, by which he grew rich in the service of his master Laban, as it is recorded in the latter part of the 30th chapter of the book of Genesis? Surely common sense and reason must see, that these apparently trivial relations can never be entitled to the sublime and sacred title of the **WORD OF GOD**, if they involve nothing more in them than what appears on the face of the letter; and therefore common sense and reason must acknowledge, that if those relations be indeed the inspired speech of the **MOST HIGH GOD**, they must

\* Gen. xxi. 8.    † Gen. xxi. 14.    ‡ See Gen. xxvi. 18 to 22.

§ See Gen. xxvii.    || See ditto.

must needs, in such case, contain a sense worthy of their Divine Author, that is to say, a spiritual and Divine sense, which doth not appear in the letter, but yet is concealed and conveyed under it's literal history.

We must then either change the titles of our Bibles, and no longer call them SACRED SCRIPTURES and THE WORD OF GOD, or we must allow that they are replete, in the whole and in every part, with the revealed Will and Wisdom of a DIVINE INSPIRER and SPEAKER, consequently that they are replete with an internal or spiritual sense distinct from the letter, since, as hath been abundantly proved, and might be proved yet more abundantly, there are interspersed in the Sacred Volume various historical relations, in the letter of which no traces whatsoever are to be found of any such Divine Will and Wisdom.

But thanks be to the ALMIGHTY BEING, who, in His unspeakable mercy, hath been pleased to favour us with a revelation of Himself and from Himself, there is no necessity for making any alteration in the *names* of the heavenly Volume which contains the eternal treasure; because it will appear further, from the infallible testimony of the Holy Book itself, that it is fairly entitled to it's high and dignified appellations, being in very deed and truth a SACRED SCRIPTURE and THE WORD OF THE LIVING GOD, by virtue of that deep and divine meaning, which lies concealed under every

every part of it's thereby instructive and important letter.

For let us hear now the words of JESUS CHRIST Himself on the interesting subject, "*Search, (says He) the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and THEY ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME.*"\* What he here means by *the Scriptures*, He explains to His disciples in another place, where He says, after His resurrection, "*These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the LAW OF MOSES, and in THE PROPHETS, and in the PSALMS, concerning ME.*"† The Scriptures then, which we are commanded by JESUS CHRIST to search, are the *Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms*; and we are commanded to search these Holy Records for this most weighty of all reasons, *because they testify of HIM*. But let it be considered now, in how few passages do the Books of Moses and the Psalms testify of JESUS CHRIST, if they be regarded only according to the sense of the letter? For according to that sense, their general testimony is merely concerning men and human events, in so much that there are several whole chapters, and some whole books, which, if viewed according to the letter only, are entirely destitute of any testimony concerning the INCARNATE GOD. Besides, if the testimony be confined only to the letter, why

\* John v. 39. † Luke xxiv. 44.

why is it said in another place, that JESUS, after His resurrection, "*opened the understanding of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures?*"\* For what need of having the *understanding opened* by JESUS CHRIST, if there was nothing to be understood but what was declared in the plain terms of the letter? The disciples had, doubtless, read the letter of the Sacred History over and over, but yet had heretofore, it seems, read *without understanding* it, and would have continued so to do, had not the merciful JESUS *opened their eyes*; which is surely a sufficiently convincing proof, that something more was necessary for *understanding the Scriptures*, than merely to be acquainted with the sense of the letter.

When JESUS CHRIST therefore said, "*Search the Scriptures;*" and especially when He added the sacred and powerful motive to such search, "*For they are they which testify of ME,*" He must surely mean to inform the unbelieving Jews, that there was something more contained in the Sacred Records, than what they had before been accustomed to believe; and that this something was a Divine testimony concerning Himself the INCARNATE GOD, which was to be found, not in a few detached sentences interspersed only here and there with a sparing hand, so as to render the search at once difficult and of doubtful success, but was diffused throughout the whole mass of the Divine Volume,

\* Luke xxiv. 45.



lume, constituting the substance, the vitality, the sanctity, and the unfathomable wisdom of all its most minute parts and particulars. For had this not been the case, why should the Jews be required to *search* for such a testimony? They, no doubt, had frequently, like the disciples above mentioned, read or heard the Scriptures both of Moses, of the Prophets, and of the Psalms, and yet, it is plain, they had never discovered either in their reading or hearing, that these Holy Writings testified at all to the Divine Person of the BLESSED JESUS. But how shall we account for so strange a circumstance, that a people, who entertained the highest possible respect for the writings of a lawgiver whom they believed to be inspired of GOD, and who were also in the daily habit of reading or hearing those writings, should nevertheless overlook the one grand testimony contained in them, which was, of all others, the most, the only important? It is impossible to assign any reason for so criminal an oversight, but the grossness of their ideas, in looking no deeper than the sense of the letter of their favourite books, and in not apprehending, as they ought to have done, that the inspired WORD OF THE MOST HIGH must needs involve some higher sense and meaning relating to Himself, His kingdom, His church, and His providence. It is impossible therefore to assign a reason why JESUS CHRIST should call this people to *search the Scriptures*, and to search also for a testimony concerning

cerning Himself, unless we suppose that this testimony was contained in and concealed under *every part* of the letter and history of the Inspired Volume, and though "*hid from the wise and prudent.*" was ready to be revealed unto the humble and the simple, who were desirous to find it for their spiritual edification and blessing.

And if this reasoning be seen to be conclusive, what sublime and edifying ideas doth it present to our view respecting the contents of the Holy Volume! And with what new eyes are we taught to read, and with what new ears to hear, the consecrated pages of it's wonderful history! For if the testimony concerning the GREAT REDEEMER be infused into every part of the Holy Records, so as to constitute it's very life and soul, by forming it's internal spiritual sense and meaning; if a divine life and idea thus animates, not only the general body of the Sacred Book, but also every sentence, expression, character, and incident; then what a sanctity of heavenly importance, what a sublimity of heavenly instruction, is immediately annexed to what must otherwise appear destitute of both! Then the devout reader of the Blessed Volume, like the Patriarch Jacob awaking out of sleep, is constrained to exclaim, "*Surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not; this is none other than the House of GOD, and this is the gate of heaven.*"\* For then, whilst Jesus Christ is seen and confessed

in the living records, every thing becomes interesting, every thing sacred and edifying, because every thing is seen to be full of the Divine Spirit and life of that **INCARNATE GOD**; and whilst it bespeaks His presence, it conducts to Him, and infuses more or less of His Divine power, benediction, wisdom, and salvation, into the penitent and believing mind. In this case, we are no longer offended at apparent trifles, or even at apparent contradictions, in the Sacred History, because we are enabled to discern, that what is apparently trivial, or apparently contradictory in the letter, is otherwise in the spirit, where all is full of dignity and of harmony, because all alike testifies to the **INCARNATE GOD**, His kingdom and church. In this case too, from the dawning and discovery of the **SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** in the Divine Volume, its face and that of its contents assume a new complexion and character, in like manner as from the rising of the material sun on this world of nature, all its objects, which were before involved in darkness, are seen and viewed as to their real features and beautiful proportions. The *persons* therefore recorded in the Sacred Pages are no longer regarded as mere persons of men; nor the *places* as the mere habitations of men; nor the *events* as what respect only human contingencies here below; nor the *animals* and *plants* as the mere creatures and growth of this lower earth; but whilst the believing eye is elevated to **JESUS CHRIST**, it catches and beholds

holds in them all, both generally and individually, some blessed trait of His Divine Countenance, some signature more or less conspicuous and brilliant of His eternal kingdom, power, and glory. Thus all the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Judges, and the Kings of Israel, being seen as representative figures of the GREAT REDEEMER,\* in their several histories we read His history; in the several events of their lives we read the events of His life, and of that of His church or people. And thus too, there is not a country, a city, a river, recorded in the Sacred History, but what was intended to open to the enlightened eye of the devout mind some blessed and animating prospect of that spiritual, that eternal world of living realities, in which all the natural things of this lower world originate, and of which they are at once the representative figures and truest manifestations.

That there is nothing either vague, or visionary, or enthusiastic, in these ideas, but that on the contrary, they are grounded in certainty, in reality, and in soberness, because they originate in the testimony of the WORD OF GOD itself, may yet be further manifest from the declaration of JESUS CHRIST to the murmuring disciples, who cavilled and were offended at some such ideas expressed by Himself in His memorable discourse, as it is recorded in the

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\* The ancient patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, were typical characters, in their several offices, and the more remarkable passages of their lives. *Preface to the Psalms, by Bishop Horne.*

6th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. It appears from that discourse, that he had been labouring to convince His hearers, that the *manna*, with which their fathers were fed in the wilderness, had relation to Himself, "*Who was the true bread that cometh down from heaven,*" (verse 33.) And in enlarging on this very interesting subject, He further instructs them, that this "*bread was His Flesh, which He would give for the life of the world,*" (verse 51.) Such Divine Language, however, appears to have been ill-suited to the gross apprehensions of those to whom it was addressed, and therefore, as we afterwards read, they *strove* amongst themselves, saying, "*how can this Man give us his flesh to eat?*" In answer to this cavil, the blessed JESUS proceeds, according to His first idea, to give a fuller declaration of His meaning, and therefore pronounces these awful words, "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,*" (ver. 53.) And when this appeared even to His own disciples to be "*a hard saying,*" (verse 60,) He endeavours to silence their murmurings by this extraordinary observation, "*It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; THE WORDS THAT I SPEAK UNTO YOU, THEY ARE SPIRIT, AND THEY ARE LIFE,*" (verse 63.) We are taught then manifestly, by this last declaration of JESUS CHRIST, that there is a *SPIRIT* and a *LIFE* in all that He spake and said, and that whensoever,

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therefore, He adopted natural expressions (as it was absolutely necessary He should do, since otherwise His speech could not have been apprehended by natural minds) He always annexed to them spiritual ideas, and spiritual life, and intended them to convey such ideas and such life to His hearers. Thus in the instance under consideration, where He applies the natural terms *flesh, body, and blood*, it is His manifest design, by and through those material images, to direct the thoughts and affections of His disciples to those living and eternal principles, which were in and from Himself, and which constituted Himself, viz. His Divine love, and Divine wisdom, and to teach them the saving lesson, that it was absolutely necessary that they should receive those vital principles from Him, and incorporate them into their own lives, in order to their attaining eternal life; in other words, that this was eternal life, to receive and to incorporate into themselves those vital principles. And as the blessed JESUS spake thus in the New Testament, there is every reason to suppose, that He adopted a similar mode of speech in the Old, by virtue of which, under natural figures and images, whether of persons, of places, or of things, He intended to involve and to express spiritual ideas, and convey spiritual life. "*The words which I speak, they are spirit, and they are life,*" is a declaration then, which applies alike to both Testaments, inasmuch as both are the Word and speech of the same LIVING GOD, the one,  
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of JEHOVAH before His manifestation in the flesh, the other of the same JEHOVAH in the person of JESUS CHRIST after His manifestation, and therefore we are to conclude, since in GOD is "*no variableness or shadow of change,*" that in both Testaments, under the literal expressions of the history, spiritual and internal things (called by the speaker SPIRIT and LIFE) are hidden, to the intent that they may be conveyed and discovered to such as are in a desire to find them, and in a state to profit by them, whilst at the same time they are mercifully and providentially concealed from others.

And this view of the subject will enable us to explain a mystery in the language of JESUS CHRIST, which must otherwise remain for ever inexplicable, and involved in the thickest darkness, viz. the distinction which He makes between His *Word* and His *speech*, as likewise between what He *said*, and what He *spake*. Thus He questions the unbelieving Jews, "*Why do ye not understand my speech?*" And then instantly returns Himself the singular answer, "*Because ye cannot hear My word.*"\* And thus He declares to them in another place, "*I have not spoken of Myself, but the FATHER which sent ME, He gave ME a commandment what I should SAY, and what I should SPEAK.*"† But what now shall we say is the ground of these strange distinctions between the *Word* and the *speech* of JESUS CHRIST, and also between what He *said*,  
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\* John viii. 43.

† John xii. 49.

and what He *spake*, unless we allow His language to have two distinct senses, a natural sense, adapted to the apprehension, and calculated for the instruction of the natural man; and a spiritual sense, adapted to the apprehension, and calculated for the instruction of the spiritual man? If we reject this idea, the distinctions are involved in mystery and obscurity, because it is impossible to suppose that there can be any thing like *tautology* in the language of GOD: but if we adopt this idea, the distinctions are clear, the mystery is unravelled, and the obscurity gives place to a bright and cheering light, because in this latter case we are enabled to discern, that what JESUS CHRIST calls His *Word*, and what He *says*, has relation more especially to His *internal* meaning, or to the *spiritual* ideas concealed under His external expressions; and that what He calls His *speech*, and what He *speaks*, has more immediate reference to the *expressions themselves*, and to the *external* or *natural* images thereby conveyed. With good reason, therefore, might He press home to the Jews the awful conclusion, that they “*did not understand His SPEECH, because they could not hear His WORD,*” since it must needs be impossible to comprehend the full force and meaning of the external language or *speech* of GOD, unless they were attentive to the spiritual affections and ideas involved in it, in like manner as it is impossible to comprehend the full force and meaning of the language of a man, whilst the mind of the hearer



hearer is intent only on the outward sounds, without attending to, and endeavouring to collect the true sense and purpose which those sounds were designed to convey.

With this view of the subject too, we are enabled further to discover the reason why JESUS CHRIST so frequently addressed Himself to His hearers in those remarkable and weighty words, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him ear.*" For it is manifest that these words must needs have reference to something, which was not to be heard by the *outward* ears of the material body, or yet of the *mere natural* mind, since all those, to whom the SAVIOUR addressed them, had alike *ears to hear* His outward speech and language. If then there was nothing more contained in that speech and language, but what was expressed in the letter of it, why should the DIVINE SPEAKER still say to His hearers, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,*" when yet He must needs be aware, that they all alike heard plainly that language and speech? But if that language and speech involved in it some deeper meaning than what the sound expressed; if it contained some *pearls* of heavenly wisdom, for which the letter served only as a *casket*; then we discover at once the propriety, the reasonableness, the Divine purpose, force, and mercy of the admonitory precept, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*"

It would be endless to point out all the passages in the Sacred Scriptures which bear testimony to this

this great truth, that they contain, under their varied history and letter an internal and spiritual sense and meaning, perfectly distinct from what the history or letter itself expresses, and that this internal sense and meaning is what principally constitutes them the WORD OF GOD, and entitles them to the high and holy appellation of SACRED SCRIPTURES. But it ought not to be passed over in silence on this occasion, that JESUS CHRIST Himself adverts to two historical facts, as recorded in the Books of Moses, in both of which, according to His own Divine declaration, there is contained and conveyed that spiritual and hidden wisdom of which we have been speaking. The facts are, first, *the miracle of the manna*, as related in the 16th chapter of the Book of Exodus; and, secondly, *the lifting up of the brazen serpent*, as recorded in the 21st chapter of the Book of Numbers, each of which, we learn from the authority of the GREAT REDEEMER, had respect unto Himself, agreeable to what He teaches in John, chap. iii. 14, 15; and chap. vi. 31, 32, 33. Now if these two historical facts involve in them a spiritual sense and meaning, as they must needs do, whilst they are declared by the INCARNATE GOD to have respect to Himself; and if this internal sense and meaning be not discoverable from the facts themselves, but is perfectly distinct from them, and could not have been known so certainly, had not JESUS CHRIST Himself been pleased to unfold it; then surely

surely a strong presumptive evidence at least is hence deducible, that every other historical fact, recorded in the same Sacred Books, and by the same inspired Penman, is alike significant and holy, involving in it the same Divine testimony, and expressive of the same sublime and heavenly wisdom, though possibly the fact itself, as to it's letter and history, may not appear to be stored and enriched with such important and valuable contents.

It ought not again to be passed over in silence, that JESUS CHRIST speaks of the Patriarchs *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in their representative characters as figures of Himself, where he describes the blessedness of His kingdom, by *sitting down*\* with those pious fathers of the Jewish people: and in another place, by *lying in the bosom* of one of them, as Lazarus is described in the parable, where it is written, that when he died, "*He was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.*"† For where could be the blessedness which the Saviour intended to express, if by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, nothing more had been meant than the society and friendship of those three men? The bliss of the heavenly kingdom is assuredly a heavenly and spiritual bliss, derived from the love of the DIVINE SOVEREIGN, and from mutual love; and consequently it would never have been figured and expressed by the association of mere human beings, unless they had been intended to represent that

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\* Matt. viii. 11. † Luke xvi. 22, 23.

**BEST OF BEINGS, the CREATOR and RE-DEEMER** of the universe, whose Divine mercy, and love, and wisdom, is the alone source of a solid and satisfactory joy to His penitent children. To the same purpose, it is plain from the concurrent testimony of the Sacred Scriptures, that David was intended to represent **JESUS CHRIST**, since numberless things are spoken of that king of Israel throughout the Sacred Records, and especially in the Book of Psalms, which cannot be supposed in any sense to apply to him, unless the application be made to his figurative and representative character. And let any one read with due attention the blessing with which Jacob blessed his sons, as it is recorded in the 49th chapter of Genesis, and also the blessings pronounced by Moses on the twelve tribes, as recorded in the 33d chapter of Deuteronomy, and then say, whether he conceives it possible that those blessings could be applied, in any satisfactory sense or meaning whatsoever, to the sons of Jacob, and the twelve tribes, only so far as they were representative, both generally and individually, of those spiritual and eternal principles from **JESUS CHRIST**, which constitute at once His word, His kingdom, and His church. Let him read also the beginning of the 114th Psalm, where it is written, "*When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion,*" and then say, what is to be understood by Judah being  
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the sanctuary, and Israel the dominion of Israel and the house of Jacob, unless something more be meant by Judah and Israel, than the mere tribes so denominated?

Was any further evidence necessary in confirmation of the position here intended to be established, it might be sought for, and successfully, in the writing of St. Paul, who declares expressly concerning some historical facts recorded in the Book of Genesis, that they are *an allegory*,\* in other words, that they involve an internal sense and meaning distinct from the letter; and who instructs us also, that the events discussed in the following discourses, relative to the journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, are to be regarded as *types*.† The same Apostle again, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, manifestly considers the whole of the Jewish rituals in the same instructive point of view, as must be plain to every reader, who will be at the pains to pursue the edifying and interesting chain of reasoning which distinguishes that Epistle. And it is well known, that, directed by such an example, and supported by such authority, the primitive fathers of the Christian Church, who were most celebrated for their piety and learning, cherished the same spiritual ideas of the contents of the Sacred Scriptures, as may be seen more especially in the writings of Jerome, Ambrose, Arnobius, Cassiodore, Hilary, Prosper, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Tertullian.

Thus,

\* Gal. iv. 24. † 1 Cor. x. 6.

Thus, as the Right Rev. Author above quoted, expresses it, "*They are unexceptionable witnesses to us of this matter of fact, that such a spiritual method of expounding the Scriptures did universally prevail in the Church from the beginning.*" And although some of them might possibly fall into extravagancies in their mode of interpretation, and might lament, as one of them (Jerome) is reported to have done, that *in the fervours of a youthful fancy they had spiritualized what they had not understood*, yet this is no argument against the truth of the thing itself; it is only a proof, amongst many others, that the best of men, through a blind and misguided zeal, may occasionally be mistaken; and is therefore a reason, not why we should cease to look for a spiritual interpretation of the Sacred Records, but only why we should seek and pray more earnestly for a pure light, and sure guidance, to direct us in our interpretations.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that according to the above views of the subject, there is a difficulty in conceiving, at first sight, how historical occurrences, consistently with human freedom, could have been so directed and over-ruled by the ALMIGHTY, as to be made subservient to the purposes of bearing testimony to higher things, by pointing to the GREAT REDEEMER and His kingdom, and thus, in their significative and figurative character, manifesting and expressing the spiritual things of that kingdom. But this difficulty vanishes at once,  
if

if it be considered what and whose that wisdom was, which was concerned in such contrivance and direction. For, as the pious and Right Rev. Commentator on the Psalms excellently observes on this occasion, "*The great Disposer of events known unto whom are all His works from the beginning to the end of time, was able to effect this; and the Scripture allegories are therefore equally true in the letter, and in the spirit of them.*"\* It must therefore be for ever lamented by every lover of piety and learning, that a writer, whose talents and erudition have both commanded and secured the respect of the Christian world, should be betrayed into the unguarded assertion, that in respect to the Mosaic history, *the whole must be allegorical, or the whole literal*:† For why might not the whole be at once both? In other words, where could be the difficulty for an infinite wisdom, so to plan, and so to record historical facts, that they may be true both in their literal and in their significative sense, and thus, whilst they are real events, which really happened amongst men, may point to, and serve to record the unsearchable wisdom, and unutterable mercy, of the GREAT CREATOR and REDEEMER, in the divine and spiritual administration of His Church and kingdom?

But it is urged by those, who are unwilling to admit of any such spiritual or allegorical way of interpreting

\* See Preface to the Psalms, p. 37.

† See Maurice's History, vol. i. p. 368

terpreting the Sacred pages, that there is a *danger* attending it, or, as it is expressed by a learned Prelate, that “*the practice of allegorizing the Scriptures has been attended with the worst consequences.*”\*

And, indeed, it must be confessed, that there is some foundation for this remark of the Right Rev. Author, and that *the practice of allegorizing*, as he terms it, has not always been executed with judgment, or attended with edification, but on the contrary, that whilst it has manifested in many instances a want of sound knowledge and discretion on the part of the interpreter, it has tended as frequently to bewilder and to mislead his weak and over-credulous readers. But the question is, How shall we get rid of this danger? Shall we say, because in some cases *the practice of allegorizing has been attended with ill consequences*, that therefore it ought to be altogether discarded as both visionary and groundless? Surely this is to plunge ourselves into a danger incalculably more dangerous, since it is presuming to say, that the WORD OF GOD doth not either in the whole or in it's parts, bear testimony to JESUS CHRIST; that it relates only to human occurrences and events, and hath no more of Divine spirit and life in it's histories, than other human records can pretend to. And what is all this but stopping up the “*wells of salvation*,” so that no water of life can be extracted thence for the health, the nourishment, and refreshment of those,

for

\* See Elements of Christian Theology, by the Bishop of Lincoln, vol. i. p. 69.



for whose spiritual benefit and consolation it was principally intended? Or, to change the metaphor, what is it but closing our eyes at once against every ray of heavenly wisdom, intelligence, and illumination, and thus reducing the Christian church to that same miserable Jewish darkness and blindness described by the Prophet, where he says, "*The LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes; the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read, this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot: for it is sealed.*"\* To get rid then of the danger of allegorizing the Scriptures, we must take heed how we fall into the greater danger of denying their allegorical sense and meaning. We ought therefore to digest well the wisdom which teaches us to consider, that "*a principle is not therefore to be rejected because it has been abused.*"† We ought also to use heavenly prudence and discretion in our spiritual interpretations of the Sacred Records; and since all such prudence and discretion is of GOD, and not of ourselves, we must apply ourselves in devout prayer to the DIVINE AUTHOR of the holy pages, to give us those graces, and with them a right understanding of His DIVINE WORD, agreeable to the practice of the Psalmist, where he prays,

"Open

\* Isaiah xxix. 10, 11.

† See Bishop Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures.

*“Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of Thy law.”\** If we are thus careful to guard ourselves by supplication to the INCARNATE GOD, of whom the Scriptures testify, and to interpret them according to the spirit of His holy love, charity, meekness, and humility, we may then have the consolation and the confidence to believe, that we shall not only be out of the reach of mischief in our interpretations of the Holy Volume, but shall also be conducted by the Divine spirit and life to the possession of all that wisdom, blessing, and salvation, which the WORD OF GOD, in every part of it, was intended to supply to the humble, the penitent, and the believing, agreeable to that testimony of the Psalmist, *“Through thy commandments I get understanding, therefore I hate all evil ways.”†*

If the reader yet wants any further satisfaction on the above important subject, the Author of the following pages has the happiness to think, that he is able to direct him to it, and to assure him, that, if he will follow the direction faithfully, he will not be disappointed in his search. But he must first take the liberty of asking him, whether he can be content to seek what he wants in the mire of obloquy and reproach? Has he the discernment to discover it in the dark shade of defamation, and the courage and patience to dig it out from under the rubbish of contumely, of contempt, and of the most opprobri-

ous

\* Psalm cxix. 18.

† Psalm cxix. 104.

ous appellations? Moreover, is he seeking the desired information, not in the spirit of a vain and idle curiosity, still less with a view to gratify his vanity and ambition, but that becoming better acquainted with the laws of that eternal life and order which are revealed in the **WORD OF GOD**, and more fully persuaded of their divine origin, he may be the better enabled to fulfil the Divine intentions of his **HEAVENLY FATHER**, and thus become a regenerate child of His mercy and kingdom? If such be the reader's tempers and qualifications—if he be actuated by that pure love of the eternal truth, which will prompt him to pursue her whithersoever she conducts him, whether through *good report*, or *evil report*, he may then safely be informed, that in the writings of a learned and honourable foreigner, which have lately been translated from the original Latin into the English language, he may find the clearest and fullest confirmations of the divinity, the spirituality, and the blessed tendency of the inspired Books of Moses and the Prophets. Doth he yet ask the name of this extraordinary writer? Let him seek it (where the *proper* name of a writer can alone be found) in his edifying writings, until he blushes to discover, that the mad, the visionary, the enthusiastic, the nonsensical **SWEDENBORG**, as the world, and perhaps himself, hath been pleased to call him, ought rather to have been surnamed the sound theologian, the able and luminous expositor of the Word of **GOD**, the cool and sober investigator.

gator of holy truth, the conductor to the heights of evangelical virtue, the declared foe to every species of enthusiasm, fanaticism, and disorder, whether civil or religious; the strenuous assertor of that fundamental article of Christian faith, the incarnation of the SON OF GOD, and His oneness with the eternal FATHER; the loud preacher of repentance and regeneration; and thus finally the restorer of the only true Christian religion, viz. a belief in JESUS CHRIST as the only GOD of heaven and earth, and a life according to His holy commandments of love and charity.

It is hardly to be expected that the reader will acquiesce in the propriety of this name, unless he be already well acquainted with the writings which bespeak it: but be the reader's judgment what it may, the Author of the following discourses is free to confess himself most perfectly satisfied about such propriety, and conceives himself bound further to acknowledge, that many of the best thoughts contained in the succeeding pages are derived from that truly astonishing and edifying work entitled ARCANAE COELESTIA, written by the above honourable writer. This work is an exposition of the internal spiritual sense of the Books of Genesis and Exodus, and whilst it demonstrates that in those books, as Jerome expresseth it, "*Singula verba plena sunt sensibus,*" or, as it is otherwise expressed by Tertullian, that "*Ratio divina in medulla est, non in superficie,*" it supplies at the same time the fullest

fullest and most convincing proofs of the Divine inspiration, not only of the particular books of which it treats, but of all the other books of Moses, of the Prophets, and the Psalms. But if the Author is not ashamed to make this confession, he has sufficient reason to blush, that his own explication falls so far short of the honourable Writer's in the above work, insomuch that he should never have been induced to present it to public notice, had he not been led to conceive, from the representations of others, that it may have it's use in serving as an *introduction* to the more excellent and extensive interpretation contained in that work.

Separate however from this consideration, the Author is not without a hope, that if the following Discourses be read in that humble and teachable spirit, which the fear of GOD inspires, they may be found conducive, as far as they go, towards establishing the reader in a well-grounded conviction respecting the internal spiritual sense of the Inspired Writings, and thus lead him to seek for and to cherish more and more of their heavenly life and spirit in his heart and conversation. And it is his most devout prayer that they may be attended with this happy effect, and thus may be instrumental in advancing the reader's progress towards the attainment of those evangelical graces and virtues, which alone separate man from his corruptions, open to him the kingdom of heaven, and fulfil the end of all knowledge, by rendering him a regenerate

rate child of his **HEAVENLY FATHER**, and thereby conjoining him with **JESUS CHRIST** and His kingdom, through a participation of His eternal mercy, truth, and blessedness.

The Author cannot conclude his too long introduction in words better suited to express his sentiments, than those of the pious and Right Rev. Commentator on the Psalms, so frequently adverted to above, who speaking on the subject of the following discourses, expresses himself thus, "We are taught by the writers of the New Testament, to consider this part of the Israelitish history (the call out of Egypt) as one continued figure, or allegory. We are told, that there is another spiritual Israel of **GOD**; other children of Abraham, and heirs of promise; another circumcision; another Egypt, from the bondage of which they are redeemed; another wilderness through which they journey; other dangers and difficulties which there await them; other bread from heaven, for their support; and another rock to supply them with living water; other enemies to overcome; another land of Canaan, and another Jerusalem, which they are to obtain, and to possess for ever."\* **AMEN.**

\* See Preface, p. 54.



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## SERMON I.

Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh---  
Aaron's Rod is turned into a Serpent, and  
swallows up the Rods of the Magicians.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of  
Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought  
thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a  
stretched-out arm.*

**T**HE calling and deliverance of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt is one of those extraordinary events, which at once commands the attention, and promotes the edification of the contemplative mind. It is impossible to think of such a signal operation of the Divine Power and Providence, without an equal mixture of astonishment and of veneration; and whether it be regarded in a *general* view only, or examined more minutely as to the *particular* circumstances attending it, whether it be considered in it's merely *historical* and *literal*

*sense*, or according to that more *spiritual* and *internal* meaning, which we have reason to believe lies concealed under the letter in every part of the **WORD** of **GOD**; we may be bold to pronounce, that there never was a fact recorded in history, which combined in itself more of true greatness and instruction both in it's causes and in it's consequences.

Accordingly we find in the Sacred Scriptures an especial stress laid continually upon this distinguished event. In the book from whence my text is taken, it is appealed to no less than *eight*\* several times, and on each occasion a strict charge is given to the children of Israel to keep it in remembrance. And if we examine the other historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament, we shall find that this event is never lost sight of, but is made the **BASIS** as it were both of the mercies of **GOD**, and also of the obligation of the children of Israel to obey his commandments. In short, the Word of the Old Testament is a perpetual repetition of the precept in my text, "*Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the **LORD thy GOD** brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*"

Such then being the importance of the event under consideration, I could greatly wish to engage your present attention to some of it's more particular circumstances, that so, through the divine mercy, we may

\* Deut. v. 15; chap. vi. 12; chap. vii. 18; chap. xv. 15; chap. xvi. 3, 14; chap. xxiv. 18; 22.

may be led to find from it all that saving wisdom and instruction, which it was doubtless intended to convey to the most remote generations of mankind.

The first circumstance herein, to which I shall call your notice, is a very remarkable one: The kingdom of Egypt was at this time a large and powerful kingdom, and governed by a king, whose name was Pharaoh, a mighty, but a wicked and unbelieving monarch. Turn now your eyes towards the palace of this prince, and you will see there a very strange, yet interesting sight: for behold two obscure men, whose names are Moses and Aaron, going up thither to deliver a message to the king. They were of the family of the children of Israel, who were at this time become very numerous in the land of Egypt, and were in a state of bondage. The import of the message, which these men have to deliver, is still more extraordinary than the circumstance of delivering it. It was in these authoritative words, "*Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness.*"\*

You are surprised, perhaps, at the boldness of these two men in going and delivering such a message to so great a monarch; but you ought to be informed, that one of them had previously received the message from GOD, who had appeared to him for this very purpose *in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush*,† as he was keeping the flock of his father-

\* Exod. v. 1.

† Exod. iii. 2.

father-in-law in the desert. The boldness, therefore, with which the message was delivered, as well as the message itself, was from GOD, for GOD never engages his servants in any undertaking, but he supplies them also with courage and resolution to accomplish it. In all folly and wickedness there is more or less of weakness, of inconstancy, and of fear; but where truth is, there GOD is, and therefore the truth is ever bold and resolute, as it is written, *the righteous are bold as a lion.\**

It must be plain to every considerate person, that Moses and Aaron, on this interesting occasion, were but *instruments* in the hands of the ALMIGHTY, to effect His gracious purpose of bringing deliverance to His captive people by the ministration of His DIVINE and MOST HOLY WORD; they may be regarded therefore as *representative figures* of that WORD which they administered, since all that they spake and did was under its guidance, in conformity to its dictates, and supported by its authority. It is the WORD of GOD then which ought to be regarded as the principal, the supreme agent in this miraculous message to the monarch of Egypt, and in the consequent rescue of the children of Israel from the bondage under which they groaned. And how ought this consideration to impress our minds with a devout sense of that inconceivable mercy, which hath been pleased to communicate to us all the fulness of that WORD,

as

\* Prov. xxviii. 1.

as we possess it in our Bibles! how ought we also to attend to the divine wisdom which it speaks, to the divine consolation which it inspires, to the divine message of salvation which it conveys, to the Divine Omnipotence by which it effects our deliverance from the tyranny of those most terrible of all task-masters, SIN and the DEVIL, whilst it is ever disposed to say and to do all that for us, which Moses and Aaron of old said and did for the children of Israel, when they went in unto Pharaoh, and accosted him in the divine language, "*Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto ME in the wilderness.*"

But to return unto the king of Egypt: the message was received by him in such a temper and spirit, as might well be expected from a thoughtless and imperious monarch. "*Who is the LORD,*" saith he, "*that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*"\* So spake the proud Pharaoh, in the haughtiness of his unconverted and unbroken heart; and such alas! is still the language of the careless and unconverted in all ages of the world. When GOD makes His just demands upon them; when He warns them by His Word of the danger of living in the bondage of sin and vanity; when He calls upon them to *let His people go*, that they may serve Him; they treat these messages of mercy with neglect and scorn. *Who is the LORD, say they, that*

*we*

\* Exod. v. 2.

*we should obey His voice?* Who is this GOD, that thus calls upon us to love Him and to serve Him? We know the world *what it is*; we taste of *it's* pleasures, we enjoy *it's* riches and honours, we are rewarded with *it's* favours: but who, or what is GOD, that we can be any gainers by His service. *We know not the LORD, neither will we let Israel go.* Such I say is still the impious language of the impenitent and unconverted, when yet the very pleasures which they enjoy, and which they plead as giving the world a preference in their affections, ought to have taught them a better lesson, by conducting them to that **BEST OF BEINGS**, at whose *right hand are pleasures for evermore*, and convincing them that they are debtors to His mercy even for those riches, honours and gratifications which they abuse as temptations to forget him.

The kind purposes of GOD, nevertheless, are not to be thwarted in their operation by the slights of unthinking man. The messages of GOD to a careless and sinful world, though at first rejected, must be again repeated. Such is the divine mercy, it can never rest and be satisfied, until every possible expedient has been tried, to gather every human mind out of vanity and misery into the bosom of the fatherly tenderness, blessing, and protection of a compassionate REDEEMER.

Accordingly we find, in the history before us, though Moses and Aaron did not succeed in their *first* message to Pharaoh, they are not on that account



count discouraged. For lo! they appear a *second* time at the court of the Egyptian king. But what is that which you now see in the hand of Aaron? Behold it is a *rod*; for so the LORD had before instructed him, saying, *Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.* And lo! it does become a serpent; for so it is written, *Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.\**

Who can help remarking, on this occasion, a further instance of the divine compassion and forbearance? It might reasonably have been thought, when Pharaoh had rejected the first message of GOD, that GOD would then have left him to suffer the consequences of his perverseness, without exerting any other means to convince and reclaim him. But how infinitely does the mercy of the MOST HIGH exceed all the bounds of human thought and conception! A *divine miracle* is now wrought to persuade him, who was not to be persuaded by entreaty, and a miracle also peculiarly adapted to *instruct*, as well as to persuade. The *rod* of GOD's messenger is changed into a serpent, a creeping, a subtle, and poisonous reptile, before the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants. Thus would GOD have warned the Egyptian monarch, by this most significant sign, of the dreadful consequences of his unbelief, in it's tendencies to convert the divine power, and grace, and life, into mere serpentine cunning and

\* Exod. iv. 2, 15; chap. vii. 9, 10.

and the poisonous destructive lusts of mere sensual principles and persuasions, which admit of no elevation towards heaven and it's joys, but are always creeping on the earth of gross terrestrial and corporeal gratifications: and thus would He warn all succeeding generations of men to take good heed, lest by immersing their desires in the lower things of time and sense, and thus separating themselves from heaven and it's blessed life, through unbelief and impenitence, they should again convert the divine *rod* into a *serpent*, whilst, instead of ruling over their corruptions through the divine grace and power, their corruptions bear rule over them, rendering them subtle, sensual, earthly, and infernal.

But the wonder doth not end here,—*Pharaoh*, we read, *called the wise men, and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments; for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents.\** What a singular spectacle is here presented to our view! The palace of a great king is filled with *serpents*, and these serpents not produced according to the common order of nature, but produced miraculously, *one* by the divine power of GOD, from the rod of his servant Aaron, the rest by magical, or infernal power, from the rods of *enchanters* and *magicians*.

What a lesson of further instruction is here again presented to those who are in a disposition to read and to receive it! Does the holy GOD at any time  
work

\* Exod. vii. 11, 12.

work real divine miracles to persuade, to instruct, and to turn sinful men to Himself? The spiritual enemy of man is always at hand to pervert the divine operation, and render it thereby of none effect: yea, in divers cases, this subtle foe can even imitate the work of GOD, so as to make it difficult, as in the present instance, to distinguish the divine miracle from that of enchanters and magicians. Thus vice can sometimes assume the semblance of virtue, and do actions which, in their external appearance, are like virtuous actions. And thus those most delusive of all *enchanters*, the devil, the world, and our passions, are still ever at work in our minds, if we are not upon our guard, to confound in us the purposes of GOD, to pervert his counsels, and make us insensible to all His mercies and miracles employed for our conversion.

But let us return to the palace of Pharaoh, to witness still a fresh wonder. Behold, by a most marvellous and miraculous agency, Aaron's rod swallows up the rods of the enchanters and magicians! For so it is written, *Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.\**

It is surely impossible for the most inconsiderate mind to mistake, or misinterpret, the plain language of this signal sign: for who cannot see, if he would but open his eyes, that *Aaron's rod* figures and denotes the almighty power of the grace and truth of GOD? And that the *rods of the magicians and enchanters*

\* Exod. vii. 12.

*chanters of Egypt*, therefore, figure and denote the contrary powers of sin and darkness, which would confound and pervert the divine power? Who cannot see, therefore, that by *Aaron's rod swallowing up their rods*, is figured and described, in the plainest and most impressive terms, the superiority of the divine power of the **MOST HIGH GOD** over all opposing powers, and that **GOD** hereby meant to convince Pharaoh beyond all contradiction, that his *magical* and *enchanted* powers could not stand, and were as nothing, before the divine power of the **MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH**?

Beloved, let it not be our reproach, with the unrighteous Pharaoh, not to be convinced by this awful sign. Let us no longer suffer the enchanting and magical powers of the world, and of our passions, to prevail over the power of the grace and wisdom of **GOD** in us, calling us to His service, and to His rest. But may the *rod of Aaron* henceforth be exalted in us, and may it *swallow up every other rod* that would pervert in us the divine counsels, and thereby hinder or retard our return unto **GOD**! May we thus be convinced by happy experience in our own bosoms, that the power of **GOD** is infinitely above every other power, and that the devil, the world, and our passions, have no strength, but what we give them by our unfaithfulness to the divine strength!

I should now proceed to consider the other circumstances of this most instructive history, but the present time will only permit me to observe, how  
 much

much it is to be lamented, that this, as well as the other historical relations contained in the book of the Old Testament, is so seldom regarded and attended to in any other light, than as a mere history of facts, which have nothing more in them than the facts recorded in other common histories. But do not reason and religion conjointly forbid us so to degrade the Holy Word of the MOST HIGH GOD? for if the Bible be (as we profess to believe, and as it undoubtedly is) the WORD of GOD, then who cannot see, that it must needs be something more than a mere history of external facts, such as men are every day writing, and must therefore contain, under the letter of it's history, an *internal* sense and meaning, worthy of the wisdom of an all-wise GOD, and accommodated to the spiritual instruction of those for whose spiritual use and eternal benefit it was designed? Accordingly we find, that in all ages of the Church, the best and wisest of her members have ever entertained this holy and sublime idea of the SACRED SCRIPTURES; and indeed the idea seems so congenial to all that is good and wise in our natures, that it appears as if man must take some uncommon pains to pervert both his heart and his understanding, before he can entirely divest himself of it.

Let us then, beloved, be careful how we fall into such terrible perversion; let us rather cherish holy and worthy ideas of the WORD of GOD; let us pray continually to GOD to enlighten our understandings, and purify our hearts, that we may be qualified to behold the treasures of his ineffable wisdom

dom which are stored up in his sacred volumes ; let us dig deep for these treasures, by a constant, diligent, and serious perusal of the heavenly pages ; then will the WORD of GOD be seen by us, and affect us in quite another manner than heretofore. Then shall we feel ourselves deeply interested in all it's various histories, because we shall perceive that in their true meaning, that is, in their internal sense and signification, they apply to ourselves, and to the Church of GOD in all ages. Then, in short, but not till then, shall we be in a disposition to enter into all the instruction of that particular, that most memorable history, which we have just now been considering ; because then the GOD, who wrote this history, will open our eyes to see it's internal sense and meaning, and by that light we shall be enabled to discern, that as through the divers corruptions of our natures through sin, we have each of us more or less of the spirit and temper of the unrighteous *Pharaoh* in our own bosoms labouring to keep us in *Egyptian bondage* ; so GOD, by or through His Holy Spirit and Word, and in His unutterable mercy, is ever sending to each of us a *Moses* and an *Aaron* to be our deliverers, and to lead us up out of the land of sin and sorrow, into the promised land of His own righteousness, truth and peace, by repentance and regeneration.

May this merciful GOD grant, that we may all of us be found faithful to all the counsels of our heavenly deliverers ! AMEN.

## SERMON II.

### The Waters of Egypt turned into Blood.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words, we have taken a view of some of the more particular circumstances relating to this extraordinary history of the calling and deliverance of the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

We have attended Moses and Aaron to the palace of Pharaoh, who was at that time king over Egypt: We have heard the awful message which they delivered to this mighty monarch from the GOD of their fathers: We have witnessed the scorn and contempt with which the message was rejected: And we have further seen the two consecrated messengers, not daunted with their first disappointment, but appearing again at the court of the Egyptian prince,

prince, to convince him by a miracle, who was not to be convinced by persuasion. On this occasion we were surprised to behold the rod of Aaron *turned into a serpent*, and also the rods of the magicians and enchanters of Pharaoh; but our wonder was increased at observing that the rod of Aaron *swallowed up their rods*.

Having made such observations on all these several events, as seemed most conducive to spiritual improvement, let me now direct your attention to some further circumstances of this most wonderful and edifying relation; and may that HOLY BEING who was the sole author and contriver of the various means whereby this deliverance of His people was effected, bless every circumstance thereof to our spiritual instruction and edification!

We presently find Moses and Aaron a *third* time in the presence of Pharaoh, in obedience to the commandment of GOD; for so the LORD had said unto Moses, “ *Pharaoh’s heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go, get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo! he goeth out unto the water: and thou shalt stand by the river’s bank against he come: and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD GOD of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness: and behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear. Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD; behold I will*



*I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink, and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the waters of the river.\**

Such was the awful purport of the message now delivered from heaven to the Egyptian king; and as the purposes of heaven never fail in their accomplishment, even so it came to pass according to the divine declaration; for thus we read in the succeeding verses, “*Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood. And the fish that were in the river died; and the river stank; and the Egyptians could not drink of the waters of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.*”†

One reflection must naturally occur to every thinking mind on hearing or reading the above terrible calamity inflicted on a thoughtless prince and his thoughtless people. The reflection I mean is this, that when other methods are found ineffectual to call men to repentance, and to hasten their conversion unto the GOD of heaven, it is then the usual plan of the Divine Providence to employ the salutary scourge of affliction for the purpose of begetting serious thought and apprehension. Thus in all ages  
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\* Exod. vii. 14 to 19.

† Exod. vii. 20, 21.

the judgments of GOD have been poured out on sinful and careless nations to convert them into the ways of righteousness; and thus also, in the case of individuals, where divine mercies have been slighted, divine expostulations disregarded, and divine miracles have failed in producing their proper effects, of conviction and conversion, lo! the rod of calamity is at length lifted up by the arm of Omnipotence; the vial of trouble and distress is poured out on the unthinking soul; the pleasant waters of it's life are thus turned, like those of Egypt of old, into *blood* and sorrow; and the message of the **MERCIFUL GOD**, *Let my people go, that they may serve Me*, is hereby enforced with a weight of argument, which nothing but divine mercy can press, and nothing but the grossest perverseness on the part of man can slight.

Another reflection, which will not fail to be suggested in the considerate mind on the above occasion, is this; that the *conversion of water into blood*, which is here described as the terrible effect of Pharaoh's disobedience to the kind requirement of a merciful GOD, was not only a calamity intended to scourge and to alarm, but was also a miracle and a mercy intended to admonish and to instruct; in other words, it was not an arbitrary punishment only inflicted merely in the way of chastisement and correction, but it was likewise a most *significant* and *figurative type* or *figure* ordained, like all other natural calamities, for information and edification,

by

by *expressing* and *representing*, most minutely and precisely,—that spiritual corruption of heart and life in which it originated, and thus by *making manifest* that corruption, as in an exact image and picture, to the eyes of the beholders. For the natural element of water, we learn from the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, is itself a *type* or *figure* of that eternal truth of the Word of GOD in which it originates, and which it was intended to express and make manifest in this world of nature; accordingly we read in the Gospel, that JESUS CHRIST, when speaking of that truth of which He was at once both the divine source and medium of conveyance, marks it by the significant appellation of WATER, as where He saith, “*Whoso drinketh of the WATER that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the WATER that I shall give him shall be in him a WELL of WATER springing up into everlasting life;*”\* and in another place, “*He that believeth on ME, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of LIVING WATER;*”† in which words it is plain that *water* and *living water* are terms applied by our blessed LORD to express that heavenly principle of holy truth, which proceedeth from Himself, the incarnate GOD. In like manner the term *blood*, as frequently used in the Sacred Scriptures, is manifestly designed to signify and denote a defilement and profanation of principle in the human mind, in consequence of a  
*rejection*

\* John iv. 14.

† John vii. 38.

*rejection or perversion* of the eternal truth, according to which sense of the term, the *hands* of the wicked are said to be *full of blood* ;\* and the *city to be full of blood*.† The conversion then of water into blood in the land of Egypt appears to have been a *striking figure* of that dreadful perversion and profanation of principle in which it originated, and to have been designed therefore, by the divine mercy of the LORD, at once to warn and to instruct the thoughtless and impenitent Egyptians, by presenting before their eyes a visible manifestation of the mischievous tendencies and effects of their carelessness and their impieties. And in this view the *bloody waters* of Egypt still read to us the most merciful and edifying lesson, by admonishing us in the most impressive of all language, that if we are foolish enough by our impenitence either to reject or to pervert the sacred truth of GOD'S MOST HOLY WORD, that *living water* which the MOST HIGH hath been pleased to dispense to us both for spiritual purification and spiritual life, in this unhappy case, what was designed for *blessing* will be converted into a *curse* ; the refreshing *stream* will be turned into putrefying *blood* ; and thus that heavenly element, which was designed to administer to our salvation, will, in consequence of the corruption engendered in it by our impieties, rather operate contrariwise to our condemnation, awfully verifying thus the words of the GREAT SAVIOUR, where  
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\* Isaiah i. 8, 15.

† Ezech. ix. 9.

He saith, "THIS IS THE CONDEMNATION, *that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*"\*

But to return to Pharaoh, it might reasonably have been expected, that the heart of the Egyptian king would have been moved to repentance and humiliation by this signal and significative scourge brought upon himself and his kingdom. To see all the waters of his land turned into blood; to see the fish of the river die; to find that the streams thereof were no longer capable of sustaining life by reason of their stench; all this, I say, presents such visible and striking marks of divine judgment and admonition, that one cannot help wondering how it was possible not to confess herein the hand of GOD, and be led to obey the call of His mercy.

Yet such, alas! has been the perverseness of the human heart in all ages; and such the unwillingness of the mere natural mind, especially when intoxicated by the honours, and pleasures, and vanities, of a deceitful world, to read, and to acknowledge the admonitory operations of GOD, and be made a convert thereby to the ways of His righteousness. Accordingly we presently read, "*Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them, as the LORD had said; and Pharaoh turned, and went in to his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.*"†

It is not at all improbable, since wicked and  
careless

\* John iii. 19.

† Exod. vii. 22, 23.

careless men generally confirm themselves in their wickedness, by vain and false reasonings, that the Egyptian king might employ some delusive sophistry on this occasion, to weaken the impressions, and stifle the convictions, which the *bloody waters* must otherwise, of necessity, have excited in his mind. We may suppose, for instance, that he reasoned with himself in some such manner as this: The rivers of my kingdom are indeed turned into blood, the fish thereof are dead, and my people cannot drink of the water of the river; these certainly are awful and portentous signs; but how do I know whether they are from GOD, or not? Perhaps they may be nothing more than mere natural effects; perhaps they may owe their birth to mere incidental causes, and have come to pass in the common course of human events; possibly too, even allowing that they are from GOD, they are no proof at all that He requires any thing at my hands; for what connection is there between the circumstance of a river turned into blood, and the requirement of GOD that I should *let his people go*?

Alas! unhappy and deluded prince! How is worldly greatness to be commiserated, which is thus exposed to the temptations suggested by vain reasonings, and speculative infidelity! How difficult is it for those to see the truth, whose eyes are blinded by the dazzle of earthly grandeur! How many plausible arguments can passion, in a moment, devise in opposition to the counsels and requirements

ments of a holy GOD ; and what ingenuity has not wickedness practised, in all ages, to make darkness light, and light darkness, rather than suffer it's votaries to become penitent converts to the GOD of heaven!

Beloved, we see plainly the specious fallacy by which, in days of old, the unhappy monarch of Egypt suffered his understanding to be darkened against the light of truth, and thereby drew upon himself, and upon his kingdom, a series of repeated calamities, in his wilful and hardened opposition to the contrivances and operations of a gracious Providence calling him to repentance. But whilst our eyes are open to see another's wanderings, in the mazes of error, it surely becomes us to take heed unto ourselves. Whilst we are surprised at the folly which could heretofore, in the character of a great prince, set itself against Omnipotence, let it be our wisdom, in our more private characters, to watch against the influence of a similar folly.

We do not indeed behold, in our land, the rod of Aaron lifted up literally to *turn our rivers into blood*, as was formerly the case in the land of Egypt ; but then, it surely deserves well to be considered, whether the same rod is not uplifted over us at this day, to produce *other* effects alike awful, alike providential, alike designed for our conversion, and such probably as the *bloody waters* of Egypt were intended to typify, and to figure unto all ages. For what matters it in what shape calamity and distress appear,

appear, whether in the shape of a *bloody river*, or in any other shape? If there be calamity and distress in any land, in that land there must certainly be uplifted the hand of GOD; in that land there must certainly be heard the voice of GOD calling to repentance; in that land, therefore, there must certainly be, to all intents and purposes, *a conversion of water into blood*, unless it can be proved that a change of joy into sorrow, a conversion of the purities, the consolations, the securities resulting from the eternal truth into the defilements, the miseries, and the dangers resulting from error and delusion, is not as great a wonder, and in it's real signification, the same wonder.

Here then let me earnestly call upon you to *watch*, if you would learn wisdom from the folly of the deluded prince before your eyes. Mark well the footsteps of calamity and distress in all their several shapes, whether public or private, whether of body or of mind, and believe them to originate either in the rejection or the perversion of the eternal truth, and to be the instructive admonitory manifestations of such impiety: believe them, therefore, to be the loudest calls from GOD to *let his people go*, that so the true and acceptable service of repentance and sincere conversion may be performed before Him. In recognising *public* calamity, we shall not have far to go at the present day, for we shall behold it, alas! both in our own, and in most other nations of the earth, extending it's ravages  
under



under the terrible complicated forms of *war* and of *scarcity*; and possibly we may discover *private* distress with as little difficulty, whilst worldly disappointments, the loss of health, the loss of reputation, or the loss of friends, turn the pleasant waters of worldly comfort into *waters of blood*, to the troubled spirit. But be the cause, or the kind of calamity, what it may, let it be our principal care to profit by it. Let us learn, therefore, to read, in every scourge of human trouble, the language of an inconceivable mercy, inviting us to seek shelter in the bosom of it's comfort and protection. Let us leave to the folly of the Egyptian king the miserable sophistry of explaining away the judgments of GOD, by confounding them with the operations of nature; and of turning a deaf ear to the calls of heaven, by referring the heavenly voice to a blind chance, which has no existence, rather than to the wisdom of a divine and ever operative Providence. May worldly sorrows thus open to us the gate of eternal joys! May worldly disappointments, by recalling us to God, teach us this blessed lesson, that true humility is greater gain than earthly grandeur; and that the delights of penitence, in returning to God, are infinitely more blessed than the gratifications of sense! Thus will every trouble be a call to us to come out of the darkness of our Egyptian bondage, and conduct us, by it's blessed guidance, into the light and liberty of the heavenly Canaan. AMEN.



## SERMON III.

### Reflections on the multiplied Plagues of Egypt.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N two former discourses on these words, we have considered some of the more particular circumstances of that extraordinary event to which they refer, making such reflections on each, as seemed most conducive to spiritual improvement and edification.

We now proceed to take a view of what is further interesting in this most sacred and singular history, and we again devoutly implore the divine aid to enable us to profit aright by the various and instructive scenes presented to our notice.

Pharaoh, you may remember, we left rebelling against the convictions of conscience and the hand

of Omnipotence, whilst he saw the waters of his land *turned into blood*, and yet *hardened his heart*, *neither did he hearken unto them, as the LORD had said.*

The consequence was such, as perhaps the thoughtless monarch little expected, but yet such as the mercy and truth of an ALMIGHTY GOD required for the vindication of His laws, and the deliverance of His people; a dreadful series of unheard-of calamities succeeds rapidly to the first plague with which the Egyptian kingdom had been smitten, and we no sooner read of the *bloody waters*, than we are presented with the melancholy catalogue of increased misery under the several following shapes; first, of *the land covered with frogs*; secondly, of *the dust of the land turned into lice*; thirdly, of *the swarm of flies by which the land was corrupted*; fourthly, of *the grievous murrain which destroyed the beasts of the land*; fifthly, of *the dreadful boils and blains upon man and upon beast throughout the land*; sixthly, of *the fire mingled with hail, which smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast*; seventhly, of *the plague of locusts, which came up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail had left*; eighthly, of *the thick darkness, even darkness which might be felt, which covered the land during three days*; and lastly, of *the death of the first-born.\**

It

\* See Exod. chap. viii. ix. x. xi. xii.

It is not my present intention to enter into any particular examination and explication of the nature of these several plagues, though it might easily be shown, if it were expedient, that these, like the first plague of the *bloody waters*, and like all other natural evils, which infest either the material elements, or the bodies of men, originated in spiritual causes, and were the necessary consequences and effects, as well as the awful external manifestations, of that disordered state of heart and life, in the mere natural mind, in which temporal things are exalted above eternal, the love of this world above the love of GOD and His righteousness.

But leaving such considerations to be the subject of your own more retired thoughts, I shall at present content myself with calling your attention to a few observations obviously resulting from some particular circumstances noted in the history of the above plagues.

The first reflection which forces itself upon the serious mind on the sad occasion of such repeated calamity is this—how strange it is that such a *complication* of trouble and distress should have been necessary to bring the unhappy king and his unthinking people to sober thought, and to incline their hearts to hearken unto the GOD of heaven! There is something so awful in every *one* of the above plagues, when considered *singly*, that one cannot help wondering how the human mind could remain unaffected by it; but what is our surprise to find,

find, that no less than *ten* of these scourges were needful in the present instance to beget due reflection?

Yet such, alas! has been the state of man's heart in all ages, since that unhappy day when sin first entered into it, and extinguished in it the light of the divine wisdom and truth. Our perverseness calls down *repeated* strokes of the divine rod. The **GOD** of Mercy is willing to complete our conversion, and secure our eternal bliss, by a *single* blow, but we compel Him by our obstinacy, in many cases, to *multiply* His scourges. Whose heart doth not bear testimony to this truth? Where is the man who, at one time or other, hath not been made sensible of the uplifted hand of Omnipotence troubling the waters of his life? But was the desired effect *at once* produced? Did the *first bloody waters* lead to sincere and entire conversion? Was there no necessity for a *second* plague? Alas! when will man learn the true wisdom, to bow down before the *first* chastisements of the eternal mercy? When shall we save **GOD** and ourselves the trouble of *second* scourges, and by an awakened attention to the counsels of heaven, and the convictions of conscience, and the requirements of a **HOLY GOD**, make haste to escape out of Egypt, before the *tenth* trouble convinceth us of our folly?

But secondly—It is a circumstance which cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader, that the heart of the Egyptian king during the immediate  
 pressure

pressure of each plague, was softened into something like penitence and conversion before the GOD of heaven ; but that no sooner was the plague removed, than he instantly forgot past conviction, and hardened himself again in his folly and impenitence ; for thus it is written concerning the plague of the hail, “ *Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time ; the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.*” But observe now how soon conviction is forgotten ; “ *When Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants ;*”\* and who can help seeing in this instance also an exact picture of the natural man in all ages ? When the hand of affliction presses hard, the heart instantly understands the language, and sets it’s face towards the GOD of correction. The delusions of worldly folly are for a moment dissipated, and the noise of contending passions gives place to the *still* but powerful *voice* of the eternal truth. Man hears now what he could not hear before, and is beyond measure astonished to find that he has been so long imposed upon by appearances, and mistaken the shadows for the substances of his happiness ; conviction flashes in his face, and a momentary conversion follows. Thus the FATHER of unutterable mercy, by the rod of His chastisement, teaches man the first lessons of that eternal wisdom whereby he may be saved,

\* Exod. ix. 27, 28, 34, 35.

saved. But alas! how soon are the heavenly instructions in most cases forgotten! *the hail, the rain, and the thunders* of divine correction cease, and the instruction which they taught too frequently ceaseth with them; passion again usurps the dominion over reason and conscience, and the heart is hardened, as before, against the holy impressions which it had begun to receive from above.

Beloved, may this never be the case with any amongst us! may we take warning herein by the example of the unhappy prince before our eyes! When it pleases the divine mercy to awaken us at any time out of the dream of worldly delusion by the rod of correction, may we never forget the bright light of truth and wisdom which we observe to burst forth from the dark clouds of sorrow and trouble! May we remember that that light is from **GOD**; and may we cherish it accordingly! may we learn from it, that though prosperity frequently holds out to us a delusive light which misguides and betrays, yet adversity is ever an upright monitor whose counsels are sober and safe, and whose guidance may be trusted. And if at any time we are happy enough to experience a suspension of the divine chastisements, may it be our principal care, in the day of consolation, not to lose sight of the pious purposes which were begotten, and the holy resolutions which were formed, in the hours of penitence and contrition!

Thirdly and lastly—There is another circumstance



stance of no small moment observable, respecting the plagues of which we have been speaking, viz. that the children of Israel appear to have been unmolested by them, and though they dwelt at this time in the land of Egypt, which was the dreadful scene of all the calamity above described, yet they escaped unhurt; *no plague came nigh their dwelling*; for thus said the LORD unto Moses, speaking of the swarms of flies, “*I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there, and I will put a division between My people and the people of Egypt.*”\* And again it is written concerning the plague of hail, “*Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.*”† And lastly concerning the plague of darkness, “*But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.*”‡

The instruction presented to our notice by this extraordinary circumstance is plain and obvious. The children of Israel, we know, represent the people of GOD, the faithful of all ages, whilst the Egyptian king and his people are representative figures of the ungodly and unfaithful in every time and in every place. Or, to make the application more particular, the children of Israel may denote the new man in the regeneration, with all his heavenly affections, thoughts, and tempers, whilst the Egyptian king and his people, are representative figures and images of the old or unregenerate man,

with

\* Exod. viii. 22, 23.

† Exod. ix. 26.

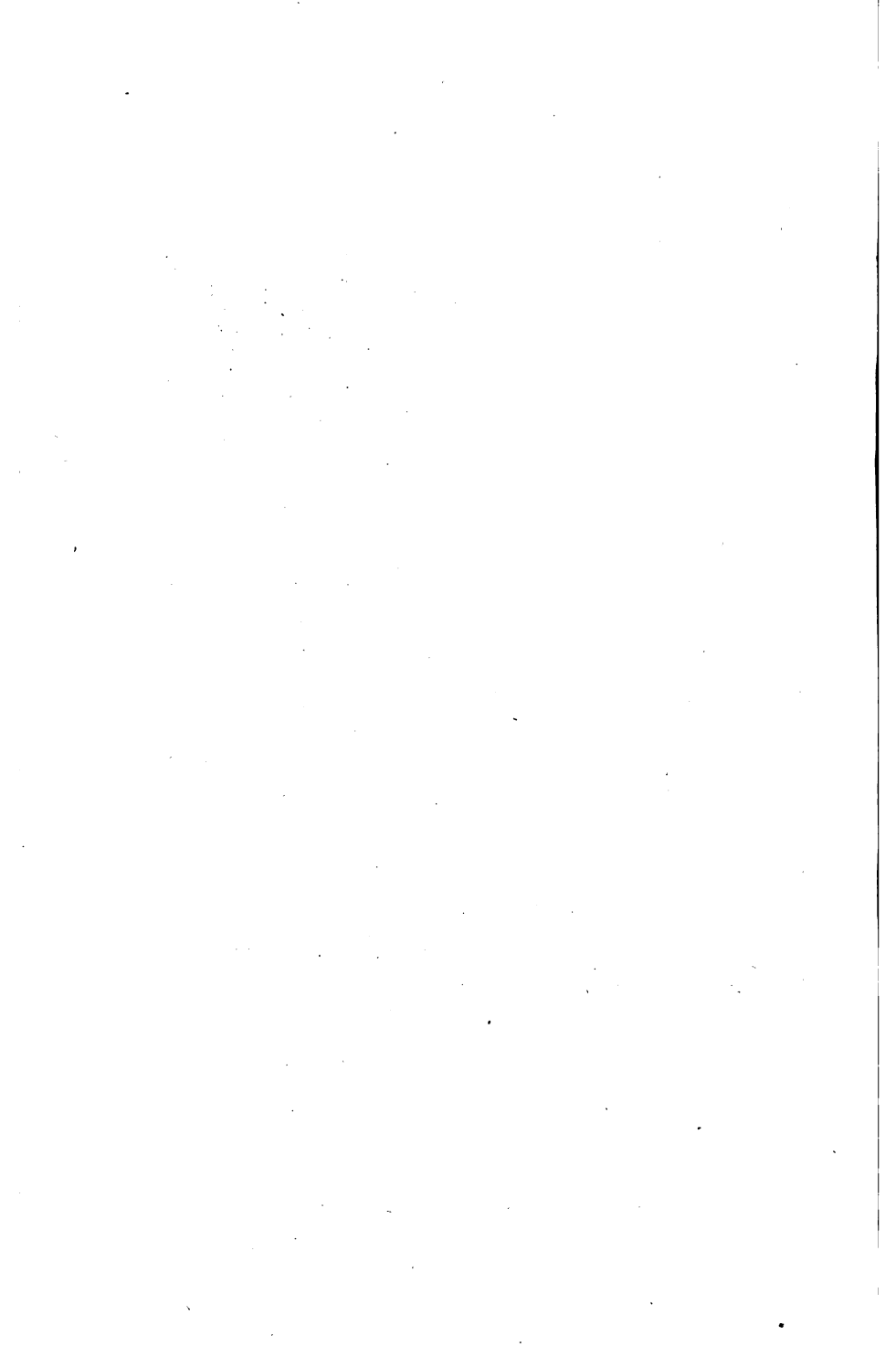
‡ Exod. x. 23.

with all his old earthly affections, thoughts and tempers. The time of trouble and affliction is the time appointed of GOD for distinction and separation between these two men or these two people. And this is further remarkable, that the old man, or the ungodly and unfaithful, are alone the subjects of misery and of mischief, of tribulation and of darkness, whilst the new man, or the people of GOD, *have light in their dwellings*, are preserved from the hand of the destroyer, and are at peace.

Beloved, may we never forget this further lesson of wisdom and instruction presented to our view! may we learn from it to distinguish well in ourselves between the *land of Goshen*, and the *land of Egypt*, and to discern how the former is ever under the protection and blessing of the MOST HIGH GOD, and preserved from the destroying plague, whilst the latter, in consequence of it's opposition to GOD, must needs be ever exposed to the scourge of calamity and distress! or, to speak plainly and without a metaphor, from the miraculous distinction here pointed out between the children of Israel and the children of Egypt, may this dictate of most heavenly admonition be impressed deeply on all our minds, that whilst we live a mere natural life, unconverted to GOD, and ungoverned by His holy laws; whilst the things of this world engage our chief regard, and the things of another world are comparatively slighted; whilst nature prevails over grace, and the impulse of passion is more attended to than the influence

fluence of heaven ; whilst we mistake appearances for realities, and are unwilling to have our eyes opened to discover the truth, and to be convinced of our error ; in this unhappy case, we must needs be abiding in corrupt principles of life and practice, and the consequence must of necessity be, *The rod of GOD will be upon us.*

But on the contrary, if we are wise to repent us of this our folly, and to seek a sincere conversion unto GOD ; if we labour to become enlightened with the divine wisdom, that we may no longer perish in the delusions of folly ; if, from a diligent obedience to the truth, we have been favoured with the happy discovery, that grace is an infinitely higher treasure than nature, and that heavenly principles confer a purer joy than mere earthly advantages ; if in consequence of this discovery, it is become our most earnest purpose to seek the renewal of our minds in evangelical purity and holiness, as the *one thing needful* to our happiness ; in this blessed case, our lot will assuredly be with the people of GOD, the true children of Abraham ; our abode will be in the *land of Goshen* ; “ *and in the midst of trouble we shall find peace.*” AMEN.



## SERMON IV.

**The Children of Israel borrow Jewels of Gold and Silver, and spoil the Egyptians.**

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a stranger in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N three former discourses on these words, we have considered some of the more remarkable circumstances attending the miraculous call and deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt: We began from the time when Moses and Aaron first went in to speak unto Pharaoh, and have proceeded to the time of the *ten* successive plagues by which the land of Egypt was desolated and nearly destroyed.

We have also made such reflections on these several circumstances as seemed most conducive to spiritual edification: We have seen how they are all applicable to ourselves, in our several states respecting

respecting the calls and operations of GOD for our conversion and regeneration; and how they teach lessons of unutterable wisdom, to all such as are in a disposition to be taught and to profit by them.

We come now to another circumstance no less extraordinary than the foregoing, neither, if it be well attended to, is it less edifying—it is expressed in these remarkable words of the LORD to Moses, “*Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold: And the LORD (it is added) gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.*”\*

That this circumstance is of singular importance, and contains in it some secret of very mysterious instruction, is manifest from it's being *previously* adverted to by GOD, when he first gave Moses the sacred commission to speak unto the children of Israel and unto Pharaoh, “*I will give this people,*” saith he, “*favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it shall come to pass that when ye go, ye shall not go empty, but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.*”† And to impress further the weight and significance of this circumstance, we find it again recorded in it's accomplishment, when the final separation took place  
between

\* Exod. xi. 2, 3.

† Exod. iii. 21, 22.

between the Israelites and the Egyptians, for we are informed on this occasion, that "*the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses, and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them; and they spoiled the Egyptians.*"\*

That this circumstance should be thought worthy to be thus *thrice* recorded in the Word of GOD; and to be commanded by GOD Himself, is a consideration which *alone* will be sufficient to impress an idea of it's solemnity and it's sanctity on every serious mind, and to convince even the most careless, that there must needs be in it a meaning and an intention which demands the most careful investigation and examination on the part of man. For when GOD speaks, it must certainly be with some purpose, and this purpose must be divine. It is impossible to suppose that the Words of GOD can in any case be either without sense, or that their sense is not full of significance and of instruction.

Let us then fancy that we hear GOD saying unto Moses, "*Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold; for I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.*"

How striking, and yet how strange are these words!

\* Exod. xii. 35, 36.

words! Who can read them without wonder and amazement, especially when he considers the little probability of their accomplishment? for what could be more unlikely, than that a despised people should be received into favour, by those very enemies who had lately held them in the utmost aversion and abhorrence? What could be more unlikely than that a people just about to depart, and never to return again, should take along with them all the riches of the land which they were quitting, and this with the full and free consent of it's inhabitants?

Yet strange as these circumstances are, they are but *types* of circumstances still stranger and more wonderful. They are but *figures*, I say, of the unalterable counsels of the great ALMIGHTY in regard to his people and their adversaries in all ages and in all places. They are but *signs*, (yet signs most significative and convincing) of that stupendous plan of divine arrangement and operation, by which the all-wise GOD is ever providing for the blessing of those who fear Him, by compelling all things else to administer to that gracious end.

For doth the time at length arrive, after the succession of the *nine* plagues brought upon Egypt, that the despised Israelites are received into favour by their Egyptian foes? Even so it is the will and the determination of the ETERNAL, that His true children, who love and fear him, shall finally survive all the malice and contempt of those who once derided them. Virtue and holiness may be slighted  
for



for a moment, but in the end they are sure to meet with respect and reverence. The unconverted and the impenitent, the careless and the carnal, may for a time make a mock at the pious labours of the true believer; they may ridicule the fervency of his devotions, the circumspection of his conduct, the seriousness of his deportment; they may laugh at his scruples of conscience, at his nice discriminations in matters of duty, at his watchfulness against occasions of temptation, at his unremitting attention to the *one thing needful*: They may call all this an excess of needless rigour; they may censure it as weakness, and expose it to contempt as the extravagance of folly: But alas! they little think how soon their judgment is to be reversed, and their eyes opened to see things in quite another light. For their judgment was the judgment of their prosperity, whilst the world deceived them by its smiles, and they knew not the day of trouble. But behold, now suddenly the hand of GOD is on them, and the afflictive rod is lifted up over their land. This is the time for them to learn wisdom, and by the light of that wisdom they begin to correct their former sentiments of folly and delusion. For hear *now* their language concerning the true believer and his labours. *This was he, say they, whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; how is he numbered amongst the children of GOD, and his lot among the saints!\**

But

But further—Did it come to pass, according to the Word of the LORD unto Moses, that the children of Israel did not *go empty out of the land of Egypt*, but *borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of gold and jewels of silver, and raiment, and spoiled the Egyptians?* Behold here also the declared purpose of the ALMIGHTY respecting his faithful children and servants in all ages of the world. In the day of their purification and separation from the Egyptian powers and principles of unrighteous love, that they may attain unto the heavenly Canaan, the pure love of GOD and of their neighbour, *they do not go empty*. Not that they are laden with the riches of this world—not that they are adorned with the *jewels of gold and jewels of silver* dug out of the bowels of the earth; for these things appear in their enlightened eyes as things of small account, because they are perishable, and because they can neither render their possessors more holy or more happy. But the *riches* and the *jewels* of the children of GOD are of another sort, infinitely more durable in their end, and more divine in their origin. They are the unfading treasures of righteousness, purity, wisdom, and truth in the inner man: They are those *pearls of great price*, for which the wise merchantman *selleth all that he hath that he may buy them*.<sup>\*</sup> They are those *treasures in the heavens, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal*.<sup>†</sup> These are the *jewels*

\* Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

† Matt. vi. 20.

*jewels of gold*, and *jewels of silver*, with which the true Israelites are ever enriched, and with which they appear adorned in the sight of God.

But the purpose of GOD doth not end here. The Israelites, we are informed, *borrowed* these jewels from the Egyptians, and *spoiled the Egyptians*. Behold a further lesson of divine wisdom and instruction! The jewels are at first in the possession of the Egyptians, but they finally become the property of the Israelites. What is the meaning of this strange circumstance, and by what clue shall we unravel this deep mystery? Let us consult the oracle of wisdom, the Word of the living GOD, and that will inform us. *Take*, saith the blessed JESUS, (speaking of the unprofitable servant) *Take the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents.\** Lo! here the mystery begins to unfold itself: the unprofitable servant hath indeed the *talent*, the rich jewel of the grace and knowledge of GOD, but then he loseth it for want of using it; it is taken from him because he made no advantage of it. Thus all the *jewels* of the divine grace, in all cases, become finally the sole property of those who make a right use of them, by applying them diligently to the guidance and regulation of their lives; as it is written, *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance;†* whereas all others, being either slothful, or unjust stewards, are *spoiled* of them, according as it is written in another place concerning

\* Matt. xxv. 28.

† Matt. xxv. 29.

concerning such unprofitable servants, *The KINGDOM OF GOD shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.\**

To conclude—The inferences from what has been said are obvious, and must needs force themselves on every thinking mind. They, who in the days of their prosperity are disposed to make a mock at the pious pains of the servants of GOD, will hence learn to remember, that other days are coming, when their mockery will be turned into serious applause; when GOD will justify the ways of his children, and compel even their present deriders to justify them also; for this scripture must needs be fulfilled, unto the remotest ages, *The LORD gave his people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.*

The true believer will hence also derive encouragement to persevere stedfastly in his course of duty, notwithstanding all the opposition and derision of unthinking men. He will be taught that human opinion is frequently mistaken, and is always changeable. He will therefore neither dread censure, nor court applause, whilst his conscience bears him witness that he is faithful to his GOD. If GOD be *for* him, he will know that no good and wise man can be *against* him, and as to the favour of others, he will be persuaded that the providence of GOD will sooner or later draw over that also to his side, when the rash decisions of worldly prosperity shall be forced to give way to the cool and dispassionate sentiments

\* Matt. xxi. 43.

sentiments which the rod of affliction must at one time or other excite in every human bosom.

Lastly—Observing how the *jewels of silver* and *jewels of gold* are at all times transferred from the *Egyptians* to the *true Israelites*, every attentive believer will read, in this circumstance, this lesson of deepest import, viz. to take continual heed unto the talent of divine grace and knowledge committed to his charge, that he may use it aright, to the regulation and reformation of his life, according to the heavenly purpose for which it was committed to him. He will see that this talent is indeed the richest of all *jewels*, and that the price of it is above *rubies*; but he will tremble proportionably at the thought either of neglecting or of misapplying it, pondering on the awful words of JESUS CHRIST to the unprofitable servant, *Take from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents*; he will discern that divine grace may be lost by human carelessness, and that the treasures of heaven can only be preserved by a diligent and sincere improvement of them. This consideration will lead him to watchfulness; watchfulness to serious self-examination; serious self-examination to repentance, to amendment of life and conversion to GOD; thus in the end he will become of the number of the true Israelites, and instead of having the talent taken away from him and given to another, he will, like the

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*the Israelites of old, borrow of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and spoil the Egyptians.*

May we all, beloved, be of this happy number !  
**AMEN.**

## SERMON V.

### The Death of the First-born, and the Institution of the Passover.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**H**AVING already, in treating on these words, considered several of the more remarkable circumstances attending the call of the children of Israel out of Egypt, we proceed now to the continuation of that most wonderful and instructive history.

Successive plagues, we have seen, had been employed without effect, under the guidance and administration of an all-wise Providence, to bring the Egyptian monarch and his unhappy people to serious reflection. They were humbled indeed, during the immediate time of their visitation, to make fair promises, and to assume appearances of sincere conversion and repentance before that **ALMIGHTY POWER**

**POWER** which afflicted them ; but no sooner was the afflictive rod removed, than they hardened their hearts, and rebelled yet more against the counsels of **GOD**, refusing still to let His people go.

Nevertheless the counsels of **GOD** must be accomplished, and the opposition of the thoughtless and unconverted only tends to help forward their accomplishment. Vice and virtue, folly and wisdom, in the nature of things, must be separated ; and if one trouble be not sufficient for this purpose, another and a greater must be employed, and will prevail. It is an unchangeable law of the **ETERNAL**, *that Israel shall come out of Egypt*, and behold now the awful, but the final efficacious means of enforcing this law !

*It came to pass that at midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon ; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians ; and there was a great cry in Egypt ; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.\**

What heart can read this account without trembling ? Who can look into the houses of Egypt thus overtaken with death and not be alarmed ? And is the **GOD** of mercy and compassion then so jealous of His law, as to destroy the innocent offspring for the sin of the guilty parent ? Is the parent so hardened

\* Exod. xii. 29, 30.



ened in perverseness and folly, that nothing but the death of his first-born child can awake him to serious reflection? Oh, consider this, *ye who forget GOD*, and who by your perverseness and inconsideration withstand that grace and mercy of the great REDEEMER, which would lead you to repentance, to conversion, and newness of life.

Behold here to what misery and misfortune your carelessness exposes you! Perhaps you have children, who love you, and are beloved by you. But do you know that your folly and forgetfulness of GOD may possibly prove fatal to those children, as well as to yourselves? Are you aware that the lives of your offspring may be the just penalty of your perverseness, and that GOD, seeing no other means of awakening you to repentance, may smite your first-born? This was assuredly the case of old with the deluded Egyptians, with whom every call to conversion was ineffectual, till they were awakened at midnight with the cry of their expiring sons. And how can *you* be assured that it will not be *your* case?

But perhaps it is your lot to have no children, and to be exempt in this respect from the divine judgment exercised on the first-born of Egypt.— But, if you have no *first-born of the body*, have you no *first-born of the mind*? Reflect a moment, I entreat you, on this interesting question. Have you no objects in which your *minds* are interested, and in which they find delight? Have you no plans in  
 life,

life, no prospects, no favourite pursuits, which engage your chief affections, and set your lives in motion? Look again into yourselves, and see, what a vast multitude of thoughts are continually born within you! What new ideas and imaginations successively arise in your little worlds! What schemes, what designs, what contrivances, to promote what you call your happiness, are ever conceived and brought forth in the fruitful womb of your affections and understandings! And what is all this generation of things but your real *offspring*? What is the first and favourite thought, imagination and design, but your real *first-born*? Take good heed then to the life of this *first-born*, and let the awful example of the first-born of Egypt teach you at least this lesson of wisdom, that every thought, every idea, every imagination, every most delightful plan and prospect of your hearts must perish, unless it be comprehended within the sphere of the divine blessing; unless through a sincere and entire conversion of yourselves to the GOD of heaven, it be taught to respect and bow down before Him, as it's origin and it's life.

But possibly you think it unjust on the part of GOD, that the Egyptian children should be slain on account of their parents, and that punishment should thus be inflicted on the innocent for the sake of the guilty.—It might be asked in reply to this objection, Who is *innocent* amongst the children of men? Have not *all sinned*, and *fallen short of the glory*

*glory of GOD?* And are not all on that account fit subjects of punishment?—But granting it not so; Is not the providence of GOD still justifiable in thus exhibiting *visible* proofs of the dreadful consequences of sin and disobedience? When we read, for instance, of the innocent victims the first-born of Egypt, slain for the transgressions of their parents, what is it that the awful judgment announces to us? What is the plain language which it speaks? Doth it not declare to all ages, with an eloquence irresistible, that *the countenance of the LORD is against them that do evil?* Is it not a sign most significative to the remotest posterities of men, that *death is the wages of sin?* Is it not a divine call to all the families of mankind, (and this of the loudest sort) to take heed to their own first-born? And can any read it without feeling the awful conviction, that not only his children, his friends, and his acquaintance, but every thing else that is most dear to him, his fortune, his talents, his faculties, the accomplishments of his body, and the fruits of his mind, the treasures of nature and the treasures of grace, all *may* perish for want of consideration, and all *will* perish, like the first-born of Egypt, if by forgetfulness of GOD they be deprived of the life, the protection, and the blessing of GOD?

But further— One circumstance on this occasion is too remarkable to be passed over in silence.—I mean the method pointed out of GOD to the children of Israel, whereby they were preserved from

this last terrible judgment inflicted on the Egyptians, the death of the first-born.

The method was this—they were required in the most solemn and particular manner, to “*take a lamb, every man according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel were to kill this lamb in the evening. And they were to take of the blood and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they should eat it. And they were to eat the flesh in that night.*”\* And it is added, “*The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*”†

Thus, we read, the children of Israel were preserved from the plague by *eating the flesh of the paschal lamb, and by sprinkling the blood thereof on the door-posts of their houses.*

It is impossible for the most careless reader not to see, that the *lamb* here spoken of was a type of the *Lamb of GOD*, who should afterwards come into the world, to deliver His people from a bondage and from plagues ten thousand times more grievous than the bondage and the plagues of Egypt.

But what is the law respecting these two LAMBS, and what are the terms and conditions of deliverances thereby? Concerning the *first lamb*, it is thus expressed, “*Ye shall take of the blood, and strike*

*it*

\* Exod. xii. 1 to 11.

† Exod. xii. 13.

*it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the house wherein ye shall eat it. And ye shall eat the flesh in that night."* And concerning the *second lamb*, it is thus expressed, "*Except ye eat the flesh of the SON of MAN, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.*"\*

Can any eye now be so blind as not to see what is spiritually implied in these terms and conditions respecting these two lambs? Who cannot discern, that the former was but a type of the latter, and that to *eat the flesh and drink the blood* of the latter, can have no possible meaning but the receiving into our hearts and lives all the holy graces, virtues, tempers and dispositions, which lived in JESUS CHRIST, and which He is ever communicating to all those who believe in Him, and come unto Him, as their only GOD, their only LORD, their only SAVIOUR and MIGHTY REDEEMER?

Would you then escape all the plagues of Egypt, and the death of your first-born? Would you become of the number of the true Israelites, and set out on your journey towards the *heavenly Canaan*? Would you thus be separated from sin, from folly, and from condemnation, to be born of GOD, and made the children of His righteousness, wisdom and peace? Remember well then the divine command respecting the *paschal lamb*! Take heed that your *houses be sprinkled with it's blood*, and that ye *eat the flesh thereof*.—Or, to speak plainly, and without the

\* John vi. 53.

the veil of metaphor—Let the wisdom of JESUS CHRIST and his Gospel be well sprinkled upon your hearts and lives, that so you may no longer be deluded by the false and pernicious maxims of the wisdom of this world. Labour to form your tempers according to His temper, your spirits according to His spirit, that so the plague of your own contending passions may not destroy you. Let it be written with *the blood of the LAMB of GOD* on your mind's understanding, that Christian humility is above all worldly honour; that evangelical charity is the chief blessing and ornament of man; that the contentment of JESUS CHRIST is an infinitely greater gain than all worldly wealth; and that the wisdom of His cross is the first and highest wisdom. Make it, in short, the first concern of your lives, and the end of your religion, to unite your wills to the will of the incarnate GOD, and to suffer your thoughts, words, and works to be ever guided, and governed by Him. Thus, when He cometh in the day of the great Judgment, "*And passeth through the land to smite the Egyptians, the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when he sees the blood, He will pass over you, and the plague shall not be unto you to destroy you; but you shall go up unto the good land to which the LORD your GOD hath called you!*" AMEN.

## SERMON VI.

The Children of Israel not led through the Land of the Philistines, but through the Way of the Wilderness---the Pillar of a Cloud by Day and of Fire by Night---the Pursuit of Pharaoh and his overthrow in the Red Sea.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, with a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N several former discourses on these words, we have considered some of the various circumstances relating to the miraculous call of the children of Israel out of Egypt: We have attended Moses and Aaron from the time of their first going in unto Pharaoh, to deliver to him the message they had received from GOD, until the time came that this message had it's due effect, and the proud monarch  
of

of Egypt became so far humbled, as to consent to let the people go.

Let us now proceed to consider some further particulars of this marvellous history, which we shall find to be no less interesting and edifying than the foregoing.

We now behold a strange sight indeed, such a sight as was never seen before those days or after them; one nation coming up from amongst another nation, to go and travel through a barren and desolate wilderness, in quest of an unknown and very distant country, to which they were directed, and to be led immediately by GOD Himself.

Was there ever such a spectacle as this presented to the eyes of mortals? Can any thing be conceived more astonishing or more grand? Let us then view it attentively, that we may apprehend the sublime wisdom which it speaks to us: let us mark the progress of these heaven-directed wanderers, that we also may learn the way which leads to the true Canaan.

The first remarkable circumstance which calls for our notice is expressed in these words, "*It came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that GOD led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for GOD said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: But GOD led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.*"\*

Thus

\* Exod. xiii. 17, 18.



Thus doth the ALMIGHTY, like a wise and tender FATHER, ever consult the infirmities of his children; when He sees them setting out on their journey to His kingdom, He proportions their labour to their strength: “He *doth not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear*.\* He encourages them first by the consolations of His mercy, before He puts them upon any considerable trials: It is the folly of a blind and mistaken zeal oftentimes to discourage young travellers on the way to Zion, by presenting *immediately* to their view unsurmountable difficulties; by requiring more from them than they are *as yet* able to perform: but this is not agreeable to the wisdom of GOD; and therefore He leads His people, though not the *nearest*, yet the *safest* way, in order to teach us not to be *over-hasty* even in the best things, for that spiritual strength, like natural, must be acquired by degrees; and that it is dangerous, in all cases, to lay too heavy burdens upon too weak shoulders: Let us adore and practise the important lesson of prudence and discretion herein taught us, that so we may comprehend the true character of the DIVINE SHEPHERD as described to us in another place, where it is written, “He GENTLY *leadeth those that are with young*.”†

But further—A second remarkable circumstance which calls for our attention is expressed in these words, “*And the LORD went before them by day*

\* 1 Corinth. x. 13.

† Isaiah xl. 11.

*in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way ; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light ; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”\**

It is impossible for the most unthinking person to read these words without being struck with their awful and edifying contents. What emotions then must they excite in the thoughtful and well-disposed mind ! For what is the picture which they present to our view ? Let us attend well to, and ponder on all it's parts, that so we may learn the fear of GOD, which is *the beginning of wisdom*. Behold six hundred thousand people, with their children, about to enter upon a desolate wilderness, wherein they were to be journeying forty years ! The fact that they did so journey is indisputable, and was never denied. But who now was to be their guide through the untrodden path, for not one amongst them was acquainted either with the land whither they were going, or with the way which led to it. So the Lord Himself deigns to be their director, and this is the manner in which He directs them. *By day* He goes before them *in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light*. Thus He is at once their *guide* and their *support* ; their *guide*, by pointing out to them the path wherein they should go, and their *support*, by the consolation and confidence which His immediate super-natural presence thus necessarily inspired.

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\* Exod. xiii. 21, 22.

Who amongst us would not think himself most happy to be thus conducted? In the journey, for instance, of human life, which is certainly no less important, and no less perilous, than that of the children of Israel under consideration, who would not esteem it a mighty privilege thus to behold the continual presence of the LORD of HOSTS? to find himself continually guided and supported, under every circumstance of daily occurrence, by *the pillar of a cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night?* Certainly, it is the imagination of all our hearts, that in such case we should never lose sight of the *heavenly cloud* or of the *heavenly fire*, but should follow faithfully their blessed direction. But let us see how far this imagination is true and to be depended on. Let us examine our hearts well on the important subject, that so we may not deceive ourselves by a *fancied* virtue which hath no reality. The GOSPEL informs us that the GOD of Israel, who thus in ancient times conducted His people through the wilderness in the pillar of a cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, hath graciously manifested Himself to us in these latter days, and is present with us, in the glorious person of JESUS CHRIST. This incarnate GOD was intended thus to be our continual *guide* and *support*; and what the pillar of the cloud and the pillar of fire were to the children of Israel in the wilderness, *that* the GREAT REDEEMER, by the light of His wisdom, and the consolations of His love, was  
designed

designed to be to us in our journey though the wilderness of this world. But how now do we deal with this REDEEMER? Do we, with the eye of faith, continually behold Him thus as our *guide* and as our *guardian*? Do we follow faithfully the leading of this *heavenly cloud by day*, and submit to the consolation and protection of this *pillar of fire by night*? The answer to these questions will determine precisely as to the sincerity of the above imagination.

The history under consideration will yield yet deeper instruction and more solid consolation to such experienced believers as are in a disposition to receive and to profit by it, because it will teach them that the BLESSED JESUS is their sure guide and strong support in every state and stage of the Christian life, whether it be of darkness or of light, of sorrow or of joy, by *night* or by *day*. For they know by experience, that the life of grace, like the life of nature, is subject to *vicissitudes*, and that they are not to expect the SUN of the divine mercy and truth, any more than the natural sun, always to shine upon them with the same degree either of heat or of lustre. But whilst they lament that their own corruptions are the latent causes of these apparent changes in the divine countenance and favour, they will learn from the above history, not to be discouraged, because they will be taught by it to believe, that as the divine presence is tempered and shadowed by a *cloud* in it's manifestations by *day*, to prevent it's over-powering them by it's brightness,

so in the darkness of the darkest *night* there is still administered a secret support arising from the hidden *fire* of heavenly love in their humble hearts and penitent affections.

But further—Greater events, if possible, call for our attention; for lo! the king of Egypt repents that he had let Israel go; and “*he makes ready his chariot, and takes his people with him; and they pursue after them (all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen and his army) and overtake them encamping by the sea.*”\*

What can be conceived more desperate than the situation of the children of Israel on this occasion? Before them was a tremendous ocean, which, to judge from human appearances, it was impossible they could pass. Behind them was the army of Pharaoh, which also, according to every human estimate, it was impossible they could withstand. The people, we read, were thoroughly sensible of their danger, “*they were sore afraid, and cried out unto the LORD.*”† Nevertheless, like too many alas! on such occasions, they joined murmuring and impatience with their prayers; for they said unto Moses, “*Wherefore hast thou thus dealt with us, to carry us out of Egypt?*”‡ But what is the reply of this meek servant of GOD? “*Fear ye not,*” saith he, “*stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them*

\* Exod. xiv. 1 to 10.

† Exod. xiv. 10.

‡ Exod. xiv. 11.

*them again no more for ever.*"\* And accordingly it came to pass ; for behold, by the miraculous power of GOD, the waters of the Red Sea are suddenly divided, and the children of Israel pass over 'on dry ground: But no sooner do the Egyptians attempt to follow them, than the "*waters return to their strength, and the LORD overthrows the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.*"†

There are *two* lessons of heavenly instruction principally taught us from the above relation ; first, That when we begin to depart out of *spiritual Egypt*, and set our faces towards the *heavenly Canaan*, we are to expect to be *pursued* by our spiritual adversaries ; and secondly, What is the best method of defending ourselves when we are so pursued.

And first, We are here taught, that when we begin to depart out of *spiritual Egypt*, and to set our faces towards the *heavenly Canaan*, *we are to expect to be pursued by our spiritual adversaries.*

It is a common imagination, that as soon as man forsakes evil, evil will forsake him, and give him no longer any trouble or disturbance, but suffer him to travel forward quietly and peaceably towards Mount Zion. This imagination however is neither agreeable to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, nor to the experience of holy men, which both unite in this evidence, that Pharaoh and his people, though they have let Israel go, will yet be in haste to pursue after them. The case is, the empire of the powers

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\* Exod. xiv. 13.

† Exod. xiv. 27.

of darkness in the soul of man hath gained too powerful a dominion, to be broken into, and dispersed all at once. The disorderly passions, and corrupt affections, though once renounced, will still press for their wonted indulgence, and at the moment, perhaps, that they seem dead and buried, they will rise again out of their sepulchres, and give us fresh disturbance. This hath been the complaint of good men in all ages, according to the testimony of David, "*Lo (saith he) they lie in wait for my soul, the mighty are gathered against me; THEY RETURN AT EVENING, they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.*"\*

Let us not be surprised then, when we find this to be the case with ourselves. Let us rather expect, and be prepared for, the *return* of those spiritual adversaries, whose dominion we renounce; and let us consider, secondly, how we are taught to act on the occasion.

The advice of Moses to the children of Israel, on the same occasion, was in these weighty words, "*Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD.*" Behold here then the advice we are to follow, and the mode of defence we are to adopt, under every *return* of our spiritual adversaries! We are to *stand still* in our *own strength*, and wait for the operation and effect of the *divine strength*. We are to be taught thus, that "*the LORD is our defender, and the Holy One of Israel is our King.*"† We are to  
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\* Psalm lix. 3 to the end. † Psalm lxxxix. 18.

be weaned hereby from all self-confidence, and in humility and entire submission brought to confess, that "*we are not sufficient of ourselves to do any thing as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of GOD.*"\* For what can the arm of man do against the principalities and powers of darkness? Who is able to *bind the strong man armed*, except the Omnipotent One, *who is stronger than him*, and who can alone *enter into his house and spoil his goods?*†

Do you complain then, that notwithstanding your departure out of *spiritual Egypt*, you are yet liable to be overtaken and assaulted by your *Egyptian foes*? Is it become a trouble to you, that whilst your faces are turned towards the *heavenly Canaan*, you are yet exposed to the persecution of those evils, upon which you had turned your backs? Take heed how you give way to the spirit of murmuring and fretfulness on the occasion, and for this purpose, treasure up in your hearts the comfortable words of the leader of Israel, on the same occasion, to his fearful people, *Fear ye not ; the LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace ;* for behold that *sea* which is before you, and observe how it's waters are dividing to let you pass through safely. The **GOD** of your fathers will make them *a wall unto you on your right hand and on your left ;* but as for your enemies, they shall perish in the midst of the sea. Thus you will finally be taught to adore the

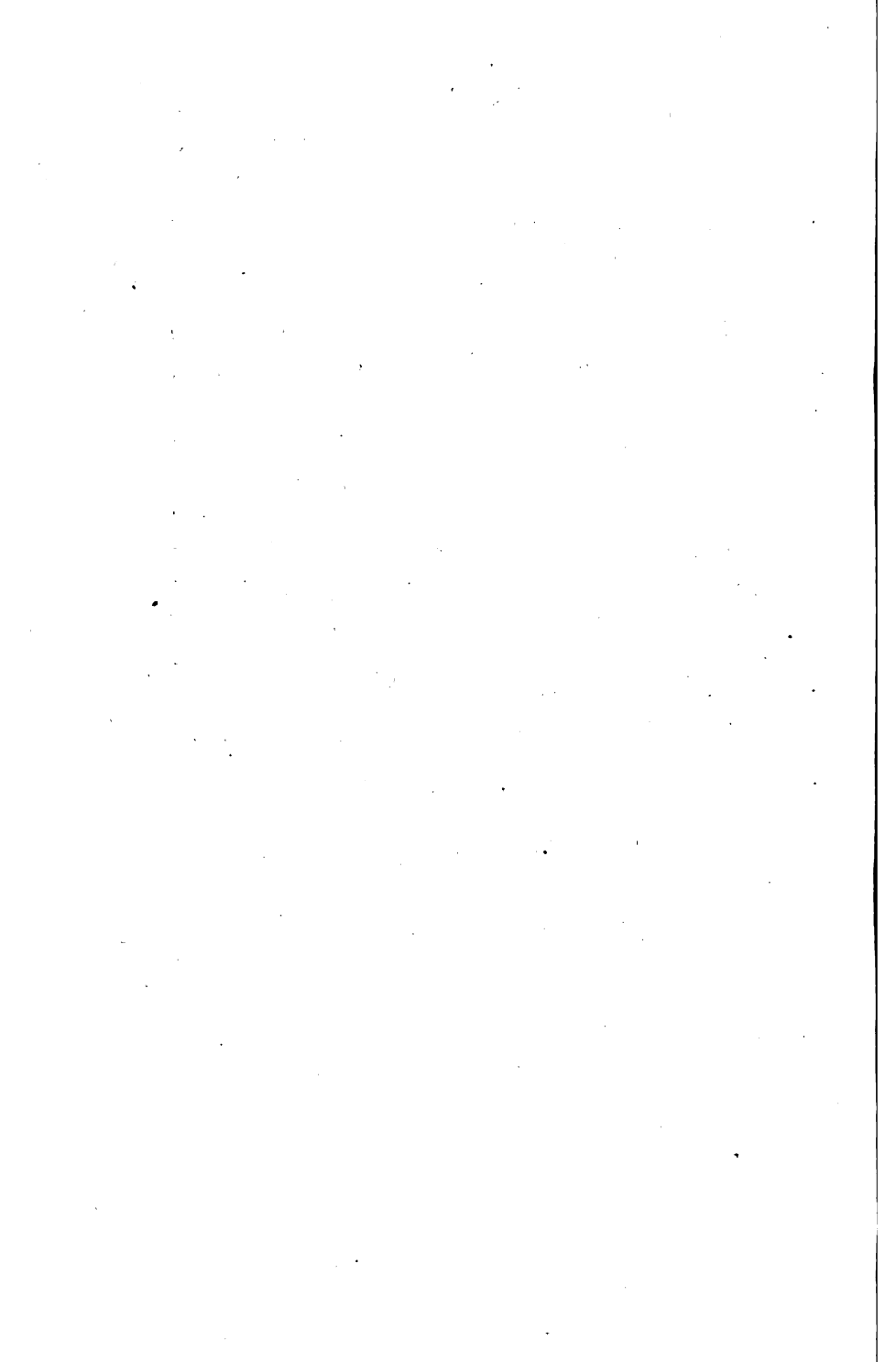
**REDEEMER**

\* 2 Corinth. iii. 5. † Matthew xii. 25 to 30. Luke xi. 17 to 23.



**REDEEMER OF ISRAEL** in your deliverance, when you shall observe that the opposition of your spiritual adversaries serves only to make manifest the omnipotence of His arm, and to humble you in the dust of contrition and self-abasement. Go forward then in the strength of the **LORD GOD**. *Be of good courage, be not afraid* of any thing but evil, and not even of evil, whilst you hate it, and do not consent unto it. Distinguish well between the sins *which you have forsaken*, and the sins *which you delight in*, and whilst you tremble with just cause for the *latter*, believe that the *former*, though they may *pursue*, can never *prevail*, whilst you do *not delight* in them, but will finally only render the monument of your victory, and of the Divine Power, more glorious, when you shall presently see them, as Israel saw the Egyptians, *dead upon the sea-shore*.\* **AMEN.**

\* Exod. xiv. 30.



## SERMON VII.

### Moses's Song, or the Duty and Advantages of Spiritual Singing.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**W**E have considered, in several former discourses, the miraculous accomplishment of these words, until the time that the waters of the Red Sea were divided to let Israel pass through, whilst Pharaoh and his host were overwhelmed in the same.

We now proceed to consider what befel this chosen people of GOD, in their passage through the long and terrible wilderness into which they were now entered.

The first circumstance, on this occasion, which engages our attention, is a most heavenly and divine song, sung by Moses, and the people who followed

him, in commemoration of the great deliverance which they had just experienced at the hand of GOD.

Never surely was there an occasion which called forth *the voice of praise and thanksgiving* more loudly than the present; and never surely *was the voice of praise and thanksgiving* better expressed than in that divine song, or hymn, which now resounded from upwards of six hundred thousand voices on the borders of the Red Sea.

Permit me to recommend this song to your particular notice and observation, as the best calculated to express your thankfulness at all times for a deliverance ten thousand times more stupendous than that of the children of Israel at the Red Sea; I mean the deliverance from sin and death wrought by the great REDEEMER.

Permit me at the same time to take this opportunity of pressing upon you the great Christian duty of *singing spiritual songs*, and together with the duty, to point out the *many signal benefits and advantages resulting from a right discharge of it*.

And first, Let me bespeak your serious attention, whilst I endeavour to point out to you the great Christian duty of *singing spiritual songs*.

This duty, like all other Christian duties, is grounded in the will and express command of GOD, who in His Holy Word repeats again and again the solemn injunction, "*Sing unto the LORD a new song; sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto*

*unto*

*unto the LORD, bless His name, show forth His salvation from day to day.*"\*

And agreeable to this injunction the book of Psalms was written for the use of the Church, that every believer might therein learn how best to glorify the GOD of his salvation.

It is impossible therefore to assign a reason for the omission of this duty, which will not plead with equal force for the omission of every other Christian duty. For as all Christian duties are grounded solely in the will of GOD, and are all consequently of equal obligation, therefore whosoever, under any pretence, would seek exemption from the practice of any one duty, may under the same pretence, remove the sanctions of every other.

We all acknowledge ourselves bound to *pray* unto GOD, and should consider it as a great sin to neglect the duty of *prayer*. But why are we not equally bound to *sing* unto GOD, and why is it not as great a sin to neglect the duty of *singing psalms*, as to neglect the duty of *prayer*? The Word of GOD, which we allow to be the sole rule and measure of all spiritual duty, presses *psalm-singing* upon our observation as often, and with the same authority of command, as *prayer*. Both duties therefore stand upon the same ground of obligation; they are both alike required by GOD; and therefore it is not easy to see why the sin of omitting the *one* is not as great as the sin of omitting the other.

It

\* Psalm xxxiii. 1, 2, 3; xcv. 1, 2; xcvi. 1, 2, 3.

It must be confessed, indeed, that our blessed LORD in the Gospel, hath no where insisted particularly on the duty of *psalm-singing*, neither hath He left us any particular precepts or regulations respecting that duty; but what then? He hath set us an *example* of the duty; for we read how He and His disciples *sung an hymn\** before they went to the Mount of Olives; and surely such an example hath all the force of an express injunction; surely what JESUS CHRIST *did* ought to have the same weight and influence with what he *said*.

Accordingly we find that the first apostles, in conformity to the example of their Divine Master, insisted much on the duty of *psalm-singing* in the precepts which they taught to their new converts; and the words of St. Paul, in particular, have in all ages been considered as the standard regulation of the practice of every private Christian in this respect, where he says, "*Let the Word of CHRIST dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the LORD.*†

Did the obligations to the duty of holy singing want any further sanction, it might be found in heaven itself, and amongst the societies of the ever-blessed, of whom we read, that "*they sing the song of Moses the servant of GOD, and the song of the LAMB, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works,*

\* Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26. † Coloss. iii. 16.

**works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; just and true are Thy ways, Thou KING of SAINTS.”\***

Thus much then may suffice to establish the *duty* of *psalm-singing*. It is repeatedly enjoined in the Word of GOD; it was practised by JESUS CHRIST and His apostles; it hath accordingly made a part of Christian service in all ages of the Church, from the beginning unto this day; and it is continued amongst the blessed to eternity.

Let us now proceed to take a view of the benefits and advantages resulting from this duty.

And here I might appeal to the *natural* effect of *singing in general*, in it's tendency to dissipate many evil affections which are very unfriendly to the spirit of true religion, such as *melancholy*, *murmuring*, *sadness*, *chagrin*, *peevishness*, *moroseness*, and the like, all which, every one knows, are much abated, if not entirely dispelled by the *cheerfulness* of a *common* song. How much greater then must be the prevalence of a *spiritual* or *divine* song over these terrible enemies to the peace of human minds!

I might further appeal to the *natural* tendency of *singing in general* to awaken many good affections which are exceedingly friendly to a religious spirit, such as *joy*, *peace*, *complacence*, *good humour*, *cheerfulness*, and the like, which daily experience teaches to be the constant effects produced by an *ordinary* song. How reasonable then is the expectation

tation that a *spiritual* song, a song of praise to the great Author of our being, would produce these same effects, but in a vastly superior degree, and in a manner infinitely surpassing all the powers of mere human song!

But passing over these considerations (which, by the way, are far from being unimportant) I choose to rest the great benefits and advantages of the duty of spiritual singing on it's tendency, whensoever it is habitually and seriously practised, *to strengthen the life of true religion in the soul*, by increasing it's energies, by elevating it's affections, by extending it's influences, and finally by fixing and giving more firmness to it's convictions.

I say, *whensoever this duty is habitually and seriously practised*, because all it's good effects, it must be manifest, will depend entirely upon these *two* points. If it be practised only *occasionally*, or with *carelessness* and *levity*, it might as well, or better, perhaps, not be practised at all, and in vain shall we look, in such case, for it's blessings and advantages; but if it be practised *habitually* and *seriously*; in other words, if to *regularity* and *constancy* in the discharge of this duty, we join a *pure affection and intention of the heart*, it is impossible, in such case, to calculate all it's salutary effects on the life of true religion in man, and that for this plain reason.

We all know how much power there is in *singing*  
and



and in music to strengthen the *general* life of man, with it's affections, whether in good or in evil. Melancholy experience hath lately confirmed to us the truth of this observation in respect to *evil*, and we have all been witnesses how the mischiefs of anarchy, confusion, and every evil work were extended and aggravated of late, in a neighbouring nation, through the fascinating and powerful influences of *popular songs*.

But if singing and music have thus a tendency to strengthen and elevate the life of man, *in general*, why shall they be denied to have the same effect upon his *religious life in particular*? Surely none but an infidel can deny that they have such an effect.

For let us suppose a man to practise only so much Christian piety, as to make a duty of singing every day a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to his GREAT CREATOR. Let us suppose that he performs this duty, not merely as a thing of course, which he considers himself as obliged to perform, but as the appointed means of begetting and nourishing in his heart a lively sense of the love and reverence which he owes to the great Author of his being. Is it possible now to conceive that such a conscientious discharge of so divine a duty will be without it's effects? Shall the song of the carnal and the thoughtless tend to elevate and strengthen their carnal and thoughtless joys, and shall not the

song

song of such a devout Christian tend to elevate and strengthen his religious joys? Shall vain songs cherish vanity, and shall not the praises of GOD nourish holiness, peace, thankfulness, charity, humility, and all the solid virtues of the Christian life? Surely it is the voice of reason as well as revelation, that no one can truly praise GOD, but he must needs in some measure become like GOD.

Besides, if such a practice was to be made regular and habitual, what a check would it prove against all the powers of evil and temptation! for how would it be possible for that man to cherish in his heart vain affections, criminal attachments, or any false and disorderly inclinations, who considered himself as thus consecrated to celebrate every day the praises of a holy GOD, and to rejoice in giving continual thanks to that REDEEMER who was manifested to *redeem him from all iniquity!*

Let me then recommend and earnestly press upon you the great duty of *psalm-singing*, not only as a duty commanded of GOD, but as a duty most highly beneficial in it's tendencies and it's effects to your spiritual life.

Perhaps you have not heretofore been so attentive to this duty as you ought to have been? Perhaps you have not considered either it's obligations or it's advantages, and have accordingly neglected it. But how can you tell what you have lost by  
your

your neglect? How can you tell what additional spiritual graces, and what additional spiritual strength, you might have secured by a right performance of it?

It is greatly to be lamented that the regular practice of this duty is a thing almost entirely lost sight of at this day, even amongst Christians. How few are there at present who regard *psalm-singing* as a necessary part of Christian devotion! But the general neglect of the duty is only a reason why the thoughtful and sincere should be more zealous in their endeavours to restore it to its pristine rank in the catalogue of evangelical exercises.

You will say, perhaps, in excuse for the neglect of this duty, that the *reading* a psalm is the same thing as *singing* it. I shall only observe in reply, that it would be well if every one would make a regular daily practice of *reading* a psalm, in the spirit of that devotion which it is calculated to inspire; but when you say that *reading* is the same thing as *singing*, I must beg leave to observe that you contradict the common experience of all mankind, and I will be bold to add, you will be of the same opinion, if you will but be at the pains to make the experiment. For only try first the effect of *reading* a psalm of thanksgiving, and then try the effect of *singing* it, and I am persuaded if there be a single spark of the spirit of true devotion, and thankfulness to GOD, in your hearts, you will then

no longer say that *reading* a psalm and *singing* it are the same thing.

But you will possibly urge, as a further exemption from this duty, that you are *not able* to sing, you have *no melody of voice*, and you have besides *never been taught the science of singing*. I answer —if you have a *heart* to sing, you will not long want the *science*; if you have a due sense of the thankfulness you owe to the GREAT and HOLY GOD, you will soon find both a voice and the power of using it in the expression of such thankfulness. And as to the *melody of your voice*, and the *artificial modulation* of it, it is well to be remembered you are not called herein to please the ears of men; you are called only to please GOD by cherishing and improving in yourself a sense of His mercies.

But you will perhaps lastly urge, that you are not in a *disposition* to sing—the cares and troubles of life perplex and weigh you down; the corruptions of your own heart are an oppressive burden to your spirits; distress and misfortune have filled your cup with bitterness.—Do you then urge this as a reason for not singing psalms unto GOD, because you are in trouble, in perplexity, and in concern about your sins? Consider, this surely is the very reason of all others why you ought to sing, and to sing most loudly. For what can be a more effectual remedy for such distress than the voice of thanksgiving?

thanksgiving? The prophet *Jonah*, you read, praised his GOD *out of the belly of the whale*;\* and *Paul* and *Silas*, you know, *sang praises unto GOD at midnight*, and under all the troubles and horrors of a *prison*.† And what was the consequence of these holy songs? The prophet, you further read, was presently delivered and upon dry land; and as to the apostles, we find it recorded, that “*Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.*”‡ And how do you know but that your singing may be attended with the like blessed effects? How do you know what deliverances may be wrought for you by the Omnipotence of GOD, whilst you thus lift up your voice in thanksgiving, and sing praises unto His NAME?

In short, every thing calls upon you to the regular discharge of the duty of *psalm-singing*. GOD calls upon you by His Word; JESUS CHRIST, the holy angels and all the saints call upon you by their *examples*; your very troubles, and infirmities and sins call upon you by the hopes of obtaining comfort, and strength, and forgiveness. What shall I say more? Whether you regard duty, or regard interest; whether you seek pleasure, or seek profit; to please GOD, or to gratify yourselves; to be holy, or to be happy; to enjoy true peace here below, or to be fitted for eternal glory hereafter in the realms  
of

\* *Jonah* ii. 9. † *Acts* xvi. 25. ‡ *Acts* xvi. 26.

of bliss ; whether, I say, you seek any or all of these blessings, you must needs confess, that, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O MOST HIGH; to show forth Thy loving-kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night.*"\* AMEN.

\* Psalm xcii. 1, 2.

## SERMON VIII.

**The Bitter Waters of Marah, and the miraculous method by which they were made Sweet.**

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we had the happiness of witnessing the holy joy with which the children of Israel celebrated the praises of their GOD, and consoled their own thankful hearts, on the occasion of their miraculous deliverance from the power and malice of their Egyptian pursuers.

We proceed now to attend this highly-favoured people in their further journey through that great and terrible wilderness into which they are entered; and to mark those particular and extraordinary interferences of the Divine Power, which at once was their secure guide and most safe protection  
under

under all the perplexities which might bewilder, and the dangers which might confound them.

Before we proceed, I shall beg leave to call your attention to an observation of the Apostle's, respecting those wonderful events which we are about to consider. His observation is in these words, "*Now these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*"\* It may be necessary to remark, by the way, that the expression in the original here rendered *ensamples*, might more properly be rendered *types*, or *figures*; so that, according to this interpretation, the words of the Apostle imply these two things; first, That all the events which befel the children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness, are *types*, or *figures*, of those spiritual things which befel us also in our spiritual journey through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan; secondly, That they were written of the Divine Providence *for our instruction*, that is to say, for our guidance and edification, that we might ponder the deep and holy wisdom which they involve, and directing our steps by that wisdom, might find it to be a blessed *light unto our paths*,

Keeping this observation then in view, let us proceed to attend the heavenly directed travellers, and mark the instructive *types*, or *figures*, which their journey presents to our notice, and through the providence of the MOST HIGH transmits for our edification.

No



No sooner do the chosen people quit the borders of that sea, which had been the memorable scene of their deliverance, and of the destruction of their pursuers, than they advance three days' journey in the wilderness, and come to a place called *Marah*. The place, we learn, received this it's name from it's waters, which were *bitter*, for thus it is written in the holy records which contain it's history, "*And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore the name of it was called Marah.*"\*

It is remarkable that the ALMIGHTY should so soon expose the faith of his people to this severe trial, by bringing them to a place where the water was too bitter to be drank. And this is the more remarkable, when we reflect that He was able, by His omnipotence, instantly to have made the water sweet, so as to have prevented the murmurings and repinings, which (we read in the next verse) were the mournful effects produced by the *bitter waters*.

But "*the ways of GOD are not as our ways, neither His thoughts as our thoughts,*"† and the present occasion confirms the truth of this observation. GOD might, indeed, have spared his people in this instance, and instead of putting their faith to so trying a proof, he might have converted the waters of Marah into sweetness, before their bitter taste had excited discontent. But how then would the blessed purposes of his providence have been accomplished, which  
required,

\* Exod. xv. 23. † Isaiah lv. 8

required, not that his people should be *pleased*, but that they should be *purified*; not that they should be *exempt from trials and troubles*, but that by trials and troubles their faith should be exercised, their virtue confirmed, and their trust in their Divine Guide and Protector rendered more absolute and unreserved?

Let us learn then, from this circumstance of the *bitter waters*, the deep and holy wisdom which it involves, and which it was intended to transmit pure and undefiled to the latest posterities of mankind.

For there will be times when we also, in the course of our pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world, must come to our *Marah*, and taste of its *bitter waters*. The cup of joy and consolation will be dashed suddenly out of our hands, and we shall find nothing to drink but the dregs of bitterness and sorrow. The ways of Providence will herein appear to us darkened with perplexity, and we shall be led to imagine that GOD has either forsaken or forgotten us. Who amongst us has not *already* experienced some effects of this trying counsel of the ALMIGHTY? Who amongst us has not tasted at times the *waters of Marah*?

Let the *waters of Marah* then be our instructors, and let us learn from their *bitterness* this lesson of edifying wisdom which they teach, that the cup of sorrow, though not so *pleasant*, is frequently more *profitable* than the cup of consolation. Let us learn further, that the *bitter water* is equally under the appointment and control of the Divine Providence

as the *sweet*, and that whether we *mourn* or are *comforted*, the purposes of GOD towards us are alike gracious, full of compassion, and of tender mercy. A fond and destructive self-love may perhaps suggest to us, as it appears to have done to the Israelites of old, that it would be better for us if there was no such place as *Marah*; if no drop of bitterness ever mixed itself with the waters of our lives. But let us remember that *Marah* is an appointed station for all the children of GOD, the true Israelites, in all ages, and that howsoever unpleasant it's waters may seem to the *taste*, they never fail to convey health, and strength, and blessing to every vital principle of the spiritual constitution. For it is the happy tendency of trouble to wean us from the love of ourselves and of this world, and to inspire us with the love of GOD and of our neighbour; it renders our hearts soft and obedient to divine influences; it opens our eyes to contemplate the bright prospects of eternity, which temporal joys so frequently conceal from our view. GOD, therefore, in His wisdom and providence, though he could replenish our cups continually with the water of comfort, sees it nevertheless expedient to mix at times the water of sorrow, because he knows that *it is good for us to be afflicted*; or as the Apostle expresseth it, that "*Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of GOD*

*is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*"\*

The experienced and intelligent Christian will discover a still deeper meaning and signification in the *waters of Marah*, because he will be enlightened to discern, that they have relation to that peculiar state in the regenerate life, in which he can no longer derive sweetness and satisfaction from the mere *knowledges of truth*, those *spiritual waters* from which he had before received both strength and consolation. For *water*, as was above observed concerning the bloody waters of Egypt, is a natural element expressive and representative of that eternal truth of the Word of GOD, in which it originates, and of which it is a figure. *Bitter water*, therefore, is a further figure, to denote the *unpleasantness of truth*, which is a constant effect derived from the want of that heavenly spirit of love and charity to which it points, and from which alone it derives at once both it's life and it's joys. And according to this signification also of the history under consideration, *Marah* may be regarded as a necessary station of the Christian life, by reason of it's two-fold tendency; first, to wean us from all dependance on *speculative knowledge*, whilst unaccompanied by that life of heaven-born charity which is necessary for it's sanctification and blessedness; and secondly, to conduct us to that supreme good, the love of GOD, and the love of our neighbour, which per-  
haps

\* Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.

haps we should never be led to pursue with the ardour necessary for it's attainment, unless we are previously convinced by the *bitter water*, that knowledge *alone* cannot constitute our proper bliss, and that the water can never be rendered *sweet* but by the life of knowledge.

But further—the providence of the MOST HIGH, whilst it permits it's favourite children to drink the waters of affliction, is perpetually watchful to turn their sorrow into joy, as soon as ever those waters have had their proper effect, for thus we read in the very next verse concerning the children of Israel at the waters of *Marah*, “*Moses cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet;*” and then it is added, “*There he made for them a statute and an ordinance; and there He proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy GOD, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD that healeth thee.*”\*

What this memorable *tree* was, which healed the *bitter waters*, and what were it's particular virtues, we are not informed; we only read of it's wonderful and blessed effects in rendering the waters *sweet* again; and we read further, that it was a tree, not  
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\* Exod. xv, 25, 26.

of man's discovery, but of the LORD's; for the LORD, it is written, *showed it unto Moses.*

Who amongst us would not rejoice, and rejoice justly, if such a tree were now to be found growing on the face of the earth; a tree whose healing virtues would remove the bitterness of every calamity, and communicate a blessed sweetness to all the waters of our life? Who, I say, amongst us would not sell all that he had for the purchase of such a tree?

But is it a matter of doubt then whether such a wonderful tree exists at this day upon the earth, or not? Can Christians, at least, hesitate for a moment to declare their full and positive belief in the existence of such a tree? Alas! if this be the case with us, it is too plain a proof with what *little*, or rather *no* attention we have read the Word of GOD, and particularly that part of it which contains the history of this tree! Let us then read it again, and blush at our carelessness, and the dulness of our apprehension, which did not before discover from it what this extraordinary tree is, and means. For observe what is written on the sacred occasion, "*There He (that is, the LORD) made for them a statute and an ordinance; and there He proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy GOD, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD that healeth thee.*"

Behold

Behold, in these words, the mystery of this marvellous tree fully opened and explained ! Behold, I say, it's true and proper interpretation in the language of GOD Himself ! The tree was certainly a *natural tree*, the production of the earth, and was cast by Moses into the natural *bitter waters* : But then, how plain is it to discern from the above words, that this *natural tree* was a *figure* of a higher, viz. of a *spiritual tree*, which the LORD still provides, and commands us to cast into the waters of our lives, to remove their *bitterness* ! Do you ask what this higher, this *spiritual tree* is ? I answer, it is the *statute and ordinance* of the MOST HIGH GOD ; for thus it is written on the interesting occasion, “ *There (He the LORD) made a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them.*” Do you ask further, how we are to *cast this tree* into the *bitter waters* of our lives ? I answer again, by hearkening to and obeying the holy commandment, so as to suffer it's heavenly virtues to influence and penetrate our lives. For thus it is again written on the occasion, “ *If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy GOD, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought on the Egyptians ; for I am the LORD that healeth thee.*”

Beloved, how long shall we shut our eyes to the divine, the ever-blessed, and ever-blessing wisdom of the Word of GOD ? How long shall we suffer  
our

our sight to remain merely in the veil of the letter, without praying to the **MOST HIGH**, to enable us to penetrate through that veil, that we may contemplate and enjoy the living, the saving realities of the eternal mercy and truth, which lie concealed underneath it? How long shall we thus remain in our *bitternesses*, those *diseases of Egypt*, which the **ALMIGHTY** is ever disposed to *heal*, but which He cannot heal but by means of the *consecrated tree*, which he hath appointed, and to which He is ever directing us for this happy purpose? We complain daily of our miseries, and yet how few amongst us apply ourselves aright for their removal! We groan under our spiritual diseases, and yet we suffer their malignity to increase, because we want either the resolution or the disposition to seek and use the proper remedy. We forget that the *bitter water*, in all cases, is the consequence and effect of our want of submission and obedience to the will and word, and order of the **GREAT CREATOR**; and that therefore it can never be sweetened but by means of this holy *tree*. We forget, I say, that it is not worldly wealth, it is not reputation, it is not the favour of men, it is not any natural virtue, talent or accomplishment, it is not even any speculative knowledge of **GOD**, and of His laws, be it ever so bright and extensive, which can of itself preserve our waters from *bitterness*: For, alas! without true repentance, without humiliation, submission, and obedience before the **MOST HIGH**, all those our natural blessings



ings and advantages will rather add to the bitterness than diminish it.

Who then are those wise children, who are willing to be instructed by their heavenly FATHER, and to profit by all his counsels? Who are those wise children, who, in the perilous journey of human life, the mysterious and oft-times perplexing passage to the heavenly Canaan, when they come to the *waters of Marah*, are disposed to profit by them; to find the *bitter* converted into the sweet? the *distemper* replaced by *health*? Let all such pray earnestly and continually unto the MOST HIGH GOD, to point out unto them that blessed and mysterious *tree*, which being cast into the waters of their lives, may impart to them it's heavenly, it's *sweetening* and healing virtues. Let them learn, that this *tree* is the WORD, or COMMANDMENT OF THE ALMIGHTY, THE ETERNAL GOD; and that to cast it into the waters of their lives, is not merely to read or hear this Word, or Commandment, for we may do this, and yet find *bitterness of spirit*; we may attain even to a deep knowledge of it's heavenly mysteries, and yet that very knowledge itself, if not sanctified by obedience, shall increase the *bitterness*—but to cast the holy tree into the waters of our lives, means, to cherish the blessed spirit of GOD's Word and Commandment in our hearts, by sincere repentance and obedience, by departing from every known evil, until we be made sensible of it's divine efficacy, in removing  
sin

sin and sorrow, and restoring to the purity, blessedness, and vigour of a heavenly life. Let us be further assured that this blessed tree ever grows near the *waters of Marah*, and is to be found there at all times by the humble and the penitent, who supplicate the divine guidance to direct them to it's virtues. And lastly, Let us know, for our consolation, that whilst the thoughtless and the unconverted perish in false joys ; whilst the children of this world, by grasping at it's delusive happiness, never discover the sacred *tree*, which would heal their *bitterness*, and communicate solid peace, we shall go on our heavenly way rejoicing, and the *waters of Marah* shall conduct us to more abundant delights, till they introduce us, with the children of Israel of old, to that blessed station, of which it is written, "*They came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees ; and they encamped there by the waters.*"\* AMEN.

\* Exod. xv. 27.

## SERMON IX.

The Israelites murmur for Want of Bread.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N a former discourse on these words, we attended the children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness, till they came to the *waters of Marah*; and we endeavoured to point out the lesson of heavenly instruction which these *bitter waters* were designed to suggest.

We proceed now to attend further this heaven-directed people, and to note the further instructive circumstances which occur in that ever-memorable journey, which was under the immediate guidance and government of the **MOST HIGH GOD**.

No sooner do the favoured tribes quit the *twelve wells of water at Elim*, near which they had *encamped*, than we find them entering into the wilder-

ness of Sin, where they begin to *murmur* for want of bread: For thus it is written, "*The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to GOD we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full! For ye have brought us forth into the wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*"\*

It is singular, and yet melancholy to observe, on this occasion, how soon the remembrance of former mercies and miracles was effaced from the minds of this people. One would naturally have thought, that after the stupendous deliverance which they had witnessed at the Red Sea, and the no less extraordinary interference of the ALMIGHTY in sweetening the bitter waters, they would henceforth have put their whole trust in their divine guide, and no longer have been betrayed into a spirit of murmuring and discontent. Yet, alas! such is the unhappy, the perverse temper of fallen and corrupt man, until he is born again from above, and thus renewed in the spirit of his mind. He forgets the LORD his Redeemer, *who hath done so great things for him.* He considers not *that* Divine Mercy and Omnipotence, which is ever present to relieve all his wants, and which permits those wants, for no other end than that it may relieve them, and thereby manifest

manifest its own glory and transcendent goodness. Instead, therefore, of humbling himself before his heavenly FATHER in time of need, and *crying unto the LORD in his trouble*, he accuses others as the cause of his calamities, and by complaint aggravates his affliction. Thus what was intended to conduct him into the arms of an infinite mercy, by converting him unto GOD, is perverted by him into a source of crimes, by exciting still greater rebellion against his MAKER.

Beloved, may this sad example be a warning and a caution unto us, that we *murmur not, as they also murmured!* Whensoever, therefore, the hand of GOD is upon us, whether it be in the want of bread, or of any other temporal comfort, let us reflect seriously who it is that permits this want, and for what end he permits it. Let us reflect, I say, that every want implies the certainty of relief, if we are wise to make a proper use of it, because every want is permitted of GOD for this great end, that He may manifest His mercy more abundantly in relieving it. Let us reflect, therefore, that to murmur at or complain of our wants, is to murmur and complain because GOD calls us in an especial manner to Himself, to experience His mercies. For if we had no wants, how could we ever know the goodness of GOD, which is principally manifested in supplying our wants? If, for instance, we had no want of salvation, how would it be possible for us to acknowledge the mercy and power of the GREAT SAVIOUR?

SAVIOUR? If we had no want of divine grace, what sense should we have of that wonderful goodness which communicates grace to us? Our very wants, then, properly understood, are our gains, because they contain in them the proper and only ground of our true bliss: They are the permissions of the **MOST HIGH**, the appointments of His particular providence, not only to call us unto Himself, but to replenish us likewise with an abundance of His favours, which could never be fully known to us, still less be fully enjoyed, unless our wants had first prepared us for their reception.

• It is remarkable that our **BLESSED LORD**, in the days of His flesh, when he was about to display His almighty power in feeding five thousand of His followers, puts this doubting question to his Apostle Philip, "*Whence, (says he,) shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*" It is added, in the next verse, "*And this He said to prove him, for he Himself knew what He would do.*"\* Such is still the mysterious conduct of this **GREAT** and **MIGHTY GOD** in all His dealings with His children. When He is about to unveil to them the brightest glories of His Majesty, He first casts those glories into a shade of obscurity and doubt, that their splendour may be rendered more dazzling by the dark cloud from behind which it emerges. In like manner, when He would confer upon them some signal favour, some distinguished mark of his loving-kind-

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\* John vi. 5, 6.

ness and liberality, He first suffers them to labour under the want of it. *This he still does to prove them, for He Himself knows what He will do.* He knows the full measure of the divine blessing which His infinite love is preparing; and he knows also that this blessing will be rendered infinitely more blessed by the previous want and distress which leads to seek and to receive it.

I have been the more particular on this subject, beloved, because there is too much reason to believe, that it's importance is not sufficiently attended to. There is too much reason, I say, to believe, that in general we have very imperfect ideas, if we have any ideas *at all*, of the nature, the intent, and I will add too, the value of our wants. We do not enough consider, as we ought, that the want of every *lesser* good was designed to conduct us to the possession of a *greater*, and that it would certainly so conduct us, if we would follow faithfully it's divine guidance. Thus in the striking case under consideration, of the Israelites in the wilderness, who are permitted to want the blessing of material bread for the sustenance of the body. This want, it is plain, was of divine appointment, and intended to lead that people to the knowledge and possession of a blessing far superior to that of material bread, viz. the blessing of spiritual bread, of bread from heaven, for the sustenance of the soul, whilst they saw the heavenly manna rained down amongst them. And thus too in every one of our wants at this day,

day, be they what they will, howsoever numerous, or howsoever distressing, we may rest assured, they are consecrated things; they are the appointments of heaven; and the mercy, the providence, the wisdom, and the omnipotence, of the **MOST HIGH**, are with them, and in them: Instead therefore of murmuring at them, we ought rather to regard them as our guides and directors to our highest good, because they would guide and direct us unto **GOD HIMSELF**.

Why is it then that we still either complain, or even speak of our wants? For what is it we can want whilst we possess the faculty (which we all alike possess) of applying to the **GREAT and GLORIOUS GOD**, to be made partakers of His Spirit, to be the subjects of His power, and to co-operate in the plans of His providence, which are so infinitely superior to all our wants, and which are also contained and concealed in our wants? Yet all this, it seems, is not enough for us, and still we complain: we still want *riches*, we want *reputation*, we want *comfort*, we want *health*, or we want *bread*. But let me ask what *sort* of riches, what *sort* of reputation, what *sort* of comfort, and what *sort* of health and bread is it that we want? Have we ever considered the *true* riches, the *true* reputation, the *true* comfort, the *true* health, and the *true* bread, which our wants involve? Have we ever considered, I say, that **GOD** permits us to be lacking in those external and temporal goods, only that He may  
remind



remind, and put us in possession of the spiritual and eternal goods which they figure, and to which they were designed to conduct us? Have we ever considered, that, notwithstanding the wants which we complain of, we still possess the faculty of applying to the **MOST HIGH GOD** for their relief, and that the exertion of this faculty, if it doth not procure for us the lower things which we want, will not fail to secure things of incomparably higher value, viz. the favour, the spirit, the benediction and kingdom of that **HOLY BEING**, who imparts continually the power of approaching Him, and appoints the want also which is to stir us up to the exercise of that power?

Let then, from henceforth, the mouth of murmuring and discontent be for ever dumb before the **ALMIGHTY**; and in the estimate which we make of the signal blessings and favours which we receive daily at his hands, let us not neglect to take our *wants* also into the account, and to thank Him alike for what temporal goods we have *not*, as for what we *have*. It is possible we may *not* have worldly riches, we may *not* have worldly reputation, we may *not* have worldly comforts, we may *not* have bodily health, or bodily bread. But what then? Shall we murmur and repine at these our temporal wants, when those very wants are not only replete with infinitely greater blessings than the objects wanted, but are so many merciful calls also from **GOD** to the possession of those blessings?  
 Shall

Shall we call ourselves *poor* therefore, when yet all the eternal riches of heaven are ready to be poured into our laps? Shall we say, we *want reputation*, when yet, if it is not our own fault, both GOD and His angels will be ready to applaud our conduct? Shall we say, we *want comfort*, and *health*, and *bread*, when still the FATHER OF MERCIES, the GOD of *all consolation*, is ever near to us, to bless us with His everlasting comforts, to communicate health and vigour to our immortal spirits, and supply us daily with the bread of eternal life?

To conclude—I should now proceed to consider that extraordinary and miraculous interference of the ALMIGHTY, in the sending of *quails*, and the descent of the heavenly *manna*, by which He was pleased to silence the complaints of the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness; but the present time will only permit me to endeavour to enforce on your minds the apostolic precept, grounded in this occasion, where it is written, “*Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*”\* Permit me, therefore, to again remind you of the infinite blessings from heaven contained and concealed in all our *wants*, and let this consideration lead us, instead of murmuring at them, rather to look for the blessings which they involve, and to supplicate the MOST HIGH to discover to us those blessings. We shall then assuredly find that in every temporal want there is  
stored

\* 1 Corinth. x. 10.

stored up an eternal *abundance*, and an abundance too of the choicest goods, because in every temporal want we may find GOD, His mercy, His spirit, His Omnipotence, and His kingdom. Thus our wants will be the blessed means of opening to us the gates of SALVATION by introducing us into the presence and habitation of the GREAT SAVIOUR; and by filling us with His Divine Spirit of humility, meekness, patience, contentment, and submission to His adorable will. Thus too our eyes will be opened to see, that as in all murmuring there is *destruction* and the *destroyer*, so in a contented and thankful want there is ever to be found a *refuge from every calamity, and the favour of the MIGHTY REDEEMER*. In short, when we have once learnt the true wisdom which our wants would teach us, we shall then become Christians indeed, and *worship GOD in spirit and in truth*, because then in every state and circumstance of life, whether of joy or sorrow, of abundance or of want, we shall adore alike His holy name, and say, *Thy will be done*. Thus converting our wants into the means of increasing our adoration, and feeling our attachment to GOD the stronger, from the need we experience of His divine aid and blessing, we shall find applied to us that high commendation once uttered by the SAVIOUR of the world concerning the poor widow, who had only a single mite to cast into the treasury, "*Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they*

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*they which have cast into the treasury; for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”\**

\* Mark xii. 43, 44.

## SERMON X.

### The Miracle of the Manna.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N treating on these words in several former discourses, we have attended the children of Israel out of Egypt, till they came into the wilderness of *Sin*, where they began to murmur against Moses, and against Aaron, for want of bread.

We have already endeavoured to show both the unreasonableness and the danger of such a spirit of complaint and discontent, and how this history of the rebellious Israelites was recorded as an example of warning and of caution to us, that in the various wants and miseries to which we are all of us exposed in the journey of human life, we should *not* murmur,

*murmur, as they also murmured, but rather, in humiliation and repentance, apply unto the MOST HIGH to relieve our wants.*

We come now to a very affecting history indeed, which exhibits the Divine Mercy and Power to us in such a view, as cannot fail to interest the considerate reader. For, behold, the ALMIGHTY hears the complaints of His people, and interposes in a miraculous manner for their relief, for thus it is written, "*Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out, and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or not.*"\* And accordingly we find that so it came to pass, for thus we read again in the following verses, "*And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp; and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost upon the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna; for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*"†

There are two things in this account, which demand our most serious attention and consideration:

First, *The miracle itself*, which the Lord here wrought for the relief of His people.

Secondly,

\* Exod. xvi. 4.

† Exod. xvi. 13, 14, 15.

Secondly, *What was involved in the miracle*; in other words, it's spiritual meaning and application.

And first, In regard to the *miracle itself*:

It is not easy to conceive any thing more august, or more stupendous, than the scene here presented to our view. Upwards of six hundred thousand people, we find, journeying at the command, and under the direction of GOD, through a desolate wilderness, where they had no visible means of sustenance, and where they were already beginning to murmur for want of bread. The GOD of mercy and compassion instantly hastens to relieve the want, into which He Himself had led them, and into which He had led them for this very purpose, that He might manifest His Divine Mercy and Compassion in relieving it. But first he gives the *promise* of relief, to prepare His people for the reception of it: "*Behold, (saith He,) I will rain bread from heaven for you.*" And as the promise of GOD can never fail in it's accomplishment, even so it came to pass; for in the evening, at the command of the MOST HIGH, behold the camp of the murmuring Israelites is *covered with strange birds*; and in the morning the ground is overspread with a *small round thing*, called *manna*, to be gathered and made into bread. Thus the ALMIGHTY manifests and magnifies at once His mercy and His power; whilst his astonished and thankful people forget their wants, and are satisfied, on seeing a *table thus miraculously spread in the wilderness.*

It

It is impossible to read the account of this miracle, without being struck with the reflection, how admirably it was calculated to check the complaints of the murmuring Israelites, and to inspire them with faith and confidence in their divine leader. To see the barren wilderness so unexpectedly and so miraculously covered in an instant with *flesh* and with *bread*, what consideration could more tend to confound their pride; to turn them from their sins; to humble them under a devout sense of their dependence upon GOD; to confirm their wavering faith; and to render their obedience in future more absolute and unreserved?

It is impossible, I say, to read the account of the foregoing miracle, without being struck with some such reflections as these, and we cannot help imagining further, that had we ourselves been in the camp of the journeying Israelites, and been eye-witnesses of this astonishing interference of heaven, we should also have been sensible of the edifying effects which it was calculated to produce—we should have feared GOD, have repented of our sins, have been humbled in ourselves, have set our faces with joy towards the land of Canaan, and have followed obediently our divine guide.

But let me ask; can we see nothing in our own situation at present, during our journey through the wilderness of this world, which resembles in the above respect, the situation of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sin? For is there any thing  
more



more wonderful in the manner by which they were supplied with bread, than in the manner by which we are supplied? It is true, their bread was sent them *miraculously* every day from heaven; our's is sent to us according to the *stated* and *regular laws* of heaven; but how does this alter the case? Is there any thing in a *miracle* more astonishing or more sublime, than in the *ordinary* operations of the Divine Providence? Is a dead man raised miraculously to life any greater proof of divine agency than a living man? Let me not, however, be misunderstood as intending by these suggestions to slight or disparage that miraculous power of the ALMIGHTY, by which in all ages He has manifested His divine control over the ordinary laws of nature, which He Himself has appointed. I only wish to suggest, that the bread which we every day eat, *comes as really from heaven*, as the bread of the wandering Israelites, and is an equally manifest proof of the astonishing and continual mercy and power of Him who sends it; with this difference, however, in it's favour, that it is the fruit and effect of the gradual operation of wonderful laws, which ought but the more to excite both our gratitude and adoration. Let us not fancy then how we should have been affected, had we seen the *quails* and *the manna*, of old, fall round the camp of Israel, unless we feel ourselves alike affected by observing the daily flesh and bread which fall round our own camp, and are brought every day to our tables.

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Let us not deceive ourselves by imagining how we should have feared GOD, how much we should have been abased in our minds, how ardently we should have set our faces towards the heavenly Canaan, had we been witnesses to His *miraculous* power every day as the children of Israel were in the wilderness, unless we are now sensible of the same blessed effects wrought in us every time we receive our *quails* and our *manna* for the sustenance of our bodies. For if we do not now discover and acknowledge the same power as wonderfully and perpetually present, and as wonderfully and perpetually operating amongst us, in providing daily sustenance for our bodies as it once provided for the sons of Jacob, it is too plain a proof how little we should have been moved by a *miraculous* power. JESUS CHRIST testifies, "*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*"\* According to this testimony, therefore, if we hear not the heavenly language which our bread speaks to us, neither should we have been persuaded had we seen the *miraculous* bread descend around the camp of Israel.

But secondly, Let us consider what was *involved* in the above miracle; in other words, what is its *spiritual meaning and application*.

Our blessed LORD gives us the fullest information on this important subject, in His discourse with the unbelieving Jews. These Jews, we read, were dissatisfied

\* Luke xiv. 31.

dissatisfied with and questioned our LORD's authority, and in the course of their argument on the occasion, they proposed to Him this insidious question, "*What sign showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.*"\* The BLESSED JESUS takes this opportunity of instructing his cavilling adversaries concerning the true nature and signification of that *manna*, that *bread from heaven*, to which they referred, and accordingly makes this memorable and edifying reply to their observation, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My FATHER giveth you the true bread from heaven: for the BREAD OF GOD IS HE WHICH COMETH DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND GIVETH LIFE UNTO THE WORLD. I AM THAT BREAD OF LIFE. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. THIS IS THE BREAD WHICH COMETH DOWN FROM HEAVEN, THAT A MAN MAY EAT THEREOF, AND NOT DIE.*"†

In these words our BLESSED LORD plainly teaches the unbelieving Jews, that the *manna which their fathers did eat in the wilderness*, had reference to Himself, who was the TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN, and that, therefore, it was designed as

\* John vi. 30, 31.

† John vi. 32, 33, 48, 49, 50.

a *figure* of Himself, and to instruct the children of Israel, whilst they were eating it, that as GOD thus miraculously sent them *material food* for the nourishment of their bodies, so, if they would obediently look unto Him, He would send them spiritual food for the sustenance of their souls. Accordingly we find in the book of Revelations, that *manna* is particularly spoken of, according to this it's spiritual sense and signification, for the promise there extended to the faithful is in these remarkable words, "*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the HIDDEN MANNA.*"\*

Is it then true, that the miraculous bread, with which the children of Israel were fed in the wilderness, was a figure of JESUS CHRIST, the true BREAD OF LIFE, and intended to excite a remembrance of this spiritual bread? Is it true, that the ALMIGHTY, whilst he thus fed the *bodies* of His chosen people, meant at the same time to refresh and feed their souls by the remembrance of His mercies, and by a participation of His grace and loving-kindness in their hearts? Let this consideration teach us also a lesson of holy wisdom, respecting the use of that bread, which our heavenly FATHER every day supplies for the nourishment of our bodies.

When JESUS CHRIST in the days of His flesh, had fed at two several times His followers in the wilderness, by the miraculous multiplication of *loaves*

\* Rev. ii. 17.

*loaves and fishes*, He rebukes His thoughtless disciples soon afterwards by this question of reproof, "*How is it that ye do not understand?*"\* And when, at His last supper, He sat down with his twelve apostles, it is recorded on the occasion, that, "*He took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of ME.*"† What blessed feasts were these, where the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD was present, feeding his disciples at once with a *double* repast, with *temporal* food for the body, and *eternal* food for the soul! But *how is it that we do not understand* that all our feasts, every meal that we make, were intended to be equally blessed, and that they will be so, whensoever we are wise to discern what our bodily food is, and means? *How is it that we do not understand*, that what JESUS CHRIST said of the bread which He *took*, and *blessed*, at His last supper, is true also of all other bread, every morsel of which may be properly called *His body*; because it is replenished with wonderful virtues, of which He is the divine source and soul? *How is it that we do not understand* further, that if we had only Christian piety enough to regard JESUS CHRIST at our meals, and when we eat and drink, to *do it*, as He commanded, *in remembrance of Him*, then this GREAT and HOLY GOD would be present at our tables, as He was once present with His first  
disciples,

\* Matt. xvi. 11.

† Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19.

disciples, and would *break bread* with us, and *bless* it, to our temporal and eternal good, and thus regale us at once with a *double* repast, a repast of perishable food for the nourishment of our bodies, and of the everlasting food of His love and charity, for the nourishment of our souls!

To conclude—It is greatly to be feared, that, notwithstanding the declared testimony of the Sacred Scriptures concerning the holy connection subsisting between *natural* and *spiritual* food; we have many of us lost sight of this connection, insomuch that we are almost surprised to hear of any such thing existing; yea, what is still a more melancholy and awful consideration, we are many of us, it is to be feared, so grossly immersed in the sensual appetites and worldly affections, as to forget and entirely lose sight of that **BREAD OF LIFE**, that nourishment of our souls, which **JESUS CHRIST** is disposed continually to give us. We say of this bread, as the Israelites said of the food under consideration, "*What is this? For they wist not what it was.*"\* Instead, therefore, of eating to the refreshment and support of our immortal spirits, we spend the few days we have to live, in doubting and disputing, either about the reality or the virtues of the heavenly nourishment. We are all of us anxious enough to feed our bodies, but how few feel the same anxiety about their immortal souls! We should think ourselves infinitely honoured by the invitation  
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\* Exod. xvi. 15.

of a great king to come and sit at his table, but, alas! how little of this sentiment do we feel, when the King of kings invites us to His table! Yet what sadder proof than this can be given, that the genuine spirit of the Gospel has not found it's way to our hearts?

Beloved, let it never be said of us, that we exhibit so sad a proof of our want of the Gospel spirit.

For this purpose let us often reflect on the **BREAD OF LIFE**, and ask ourselves the important question, whether we have ever yet tasted this heavenly bread, so as to acquire a proper relish for it, and make it our constant food? Let us ask further, do we regard the bread which is brought every day to our tables, under this it's true and proper character, as a figure of spiritual nourishment, and intended every day to remind us of our connexion with **JESUS CHRIST**? And, lastly, are we careful to call **JESUS CHRIST** to be present with us at our meals, to *ble*ss our bread and *break* it, and that *doing this in remembrance of Him*, we may enjoy at once the *double* repast of temporal food for our bodies, and the everlasting food of His holy grace, mercy, and charity, for our better part, our immortal souls?

Blessed are they, who are thus attentive to the holy law and commandment of their **GOD**! Blessed are they who thus eat and drink *to the glory of GOD*, and the peace and salvation of their own souls! Blessed are they, who not only gather *man*na  
for

for the nourishment of their bodies, but connecting it with JESUS CHRIST, and receiving it continually as a figure of His blessed mercy and love, feed thus on *the hidden manna* of the Divine presence and loving-kindness in their purified bosoms !  
AMEN.



## SERMON XI.

On the Laws respecting the Manna.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**H**AVING in several former discourses on these words considered the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their wonderful journey in the wilderness, till the time of their being fed immediately from heaven with *manna*, I shall now entreat your attention further to this remarkable circumstance, whilst I endeavour to unfold the singular laws delivered from the MOST HIGH, respecting this extraordinary food.

It has been already seen, that this *manna* was representative of that spiritual bread, *the bread of life*, which was sent down from heaven in the person of JESUS CHRIST, and which He now gives from heaven for the nourishment of eternal life, to  
all

all such as *come unto him, and keep his commandments.*

This will appear still more evident from considering the laws relating to the manna of old, as they were delivered by GOD to Moses, for the guidance of the children of Israel in their journey through the wilderness.

These laws were three in number, and were in the following order.

1st. It was commanded of the LORD, that *every one should gather according to his eating.\**

2ndly. *That no man should leave of it till the morning;†* And

3dly. *That an omer of it should be kept for their generations.‡*

Let us begin with the consideration of the first of these laws, which requires, *that every man should gather according to his eating.*

This law is manifestly grounded in the spiritual law which respects the *heavenly manna* of the eternal grace and love of JESUS CHRIST. For the law concerning this heavenly manna, as declared to us by the Divine Giver of it, is this, that every man *gathers according to his eating*, in other words, that every man receives grace from JESUS CHRIST according to the use he makes of it, or according to his application thereof to his own life in the removal of his natural corruptions by sincere repentance and conversion unto GOD.

JESUS

\* Exod. xvi. 16. † Exod. xvi. 19. ‡ Exod. xvi. 32.

**JESUS CHRIST**, therefore, says, "*Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*"\*

Let us attend well to the tenor of this awful but edifying law, and it will teach us this most important lesson of holy wisdom, that if we wish to *gather* much of the heavenly manna of the divine grace in our hearts, we must then *eat* much; in other words, we must incorporate it well into our lives. **JESUS CHRIST** never imparts His heavenly blessings to the careless, the impenitent, and the disobedient. To receive grace, we must use it; to learn the wisdom which is from above, we must first be desirous to correct our lives by it. Should the **MOST HIGH** dispense His favours to the thoughtless and unconverted, it would be doing what He has forbidden to be done, viz. "*casting pearls before swine; or giving that which is holy unto dogs.*"† An impure soul, therefore, can never expect to gather the *manna* which is from above, until it has a desire to be delivered from its impurities; and its gathering will be according to that desire. Some, therefore, *abound* in divine grace, because they have a strong desire to be cleansed from their corruptions. Others possess a *less* share of the heavenly gift, because they are as yet not so willing to part with their abominations. Others, again, know nothing of the heavenly treasure, because they have

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\* Matt. xiii. 12; chap. xxv. 29.

† Matt. vii. 6.

no inclination to submit to that process of purification, to which it would administer.

It is written further for our instruction on this interesting subject, that, "*he who gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack,*"\* to teach us in our spiritual progress, neither to be presumptuous nor despondent. The most zealous, the most active disciple of JESUS CHRIST, by all his exertions, can never attain to any higher measure of grace, than to be merely a *receiver* of the inestimable gift. He will find, therefore, under all his attainments, the necessity of a deeper humiliation and dependence, lest he should become proud and exalted in his own imagination on account of the talents imparted to him. On the other hand, the least and the lowest of the followers of the GREAT SAVIOUR will be guarded against despondency by the consideration, that the smallest portion of the divine gift is sufficient for his salvation; that where there is a sincere and humble mind, earnestly seeking the heavenly treasure, there *can be no lack*, howsoever small the appearances may be of improvement and of growth.

But secondly—It was commanded, respecting the manna under consideration, that *no one should leave of it until the morning*.

That this law is a law of singular importance, is manifest from the circumstance of it's being so frequently enjoined; for we find it insisted on both at the

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\* Exod. xvi. 18.

the institution of the Jewish passover,\* and also of the sacrifices.†

The obvious tendency of this law is to guard man against all anxiety of thought respecting the future, what JESUS CHRIST calls *thought* (or more properly *solicitude*) *for the morrow*,‡ and thus to lead him to the holy, the delightful rest and peace resulting from an entire dependence upon the Divine Providence of the MOST HIGH in all things, whether temporal or spiritual.

Not that it is to be supposed, that man is forbidden to *take thought for the morrow*, for this he must needs do both in regard to the things of this world and of another. It is the *anxiety*, the *solicitude*, the *restlessness* of thought, which is forbidden, and not the thought itself. For man must think, and is required also to think, both about the concerns of his natural and spiritual life; but then he is required to think *wisely*, and this he cannot do, until he respects, and loves to respect, the Divine Providence of the LORD more than his own prudence and foresight.

The single question, therefore, with regard to thought for the morrow, is this: Do we think under the influence of the DIVINE PROVIDENCE, and in entire dependence upon its wise provisions for us, or do we think under the influence of our own proper prudence, and in dependence upon ourselves? The difference between these two kinds

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\* Exod. xii. 10. † Exod. xxvii. 18; chap. xxxiv. 25. ‡ Matt. vi. 34.

of thought is like the difference between light and darkness, between heaven and hell. If we think merely under the influence of our own proper prudence, and thus in a mere dependence upon ourselves, either respecting the things of this world or another, we are then in darkness, and in confederacy with the powers of darkness; and in this case, all our thoughts will be full of anxiety, of restlessness, and of confusion, agreeable to that miserable kingdom from whence they spring. But if we are wise by sincere repentance and conversion to JESUS CHRIST, to renounce this self-guidance, and to place ourselves under the blessed guidance and government of the providence and foresight of the MOST HIGH GOD; if our thoughts for the future are under this holy influence, and submitted in humble dependence to the provident care of our HEAVENLY FATHER; we are then in the *light*, and in communion with the *spirits of light*; and in this case there will be a peaceableness, a calm, a blessed contentment and composure in all our thoughts, bespeaking their heavenly and divine origin: Whether we are provident for the things of this world, or for the weightier concerns of another, we shall exert the providence of that wisdom which is from above, which is *pure, peaceable, gentle*: Thus all our thoughts, being under the guidance of GOD, and not of ourselves, originating in the kingdom of light, and not in the abyss of darkness, will lead us perpetually out of the regions of sin, of darkness,

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ness, and of destruction, unto the blessed regions of purity, of light, and salvation, from whence they come, by uniting us more and more with the **GREAT REDEEMER**. Such is the blessed wisdom, such the important purpose intended for us in the heavenly law concerning the manna, "*Let no man leave of it till the morning.*"

We have here, therefore, a plain and sure rule whereby to determine, at all times, in what principle or kingdom all our thoughts originate. For if there be *anxiety* and *disturbance* in our thoughts, we may then depend upon it, we think with, and from the kingdom and principles of darkness and death, whether we are aware of it or not, inasmuch as all anxiety and disturbance are from that kingdom, and those principles: But if there be *peaceableness*, *composure*, and *trust in GOD* in our thoughts, we have then as sure a proof, that we think with, and from the kingdom and principles of heavenly light and life, inasmuch as all peaceableness, composure, and trust in GOD, are from that kingdom, and those principles. Therefore JESUS CHRIST hath taught all His children the heavenly lesson, "*Take no thought* (that is to say, anxious thought) *what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed;*"\* and to the same purpose He instructs them to pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread,*"† to preclude all anxiety about to-morrow,

But, thirdly, It was commanded of the LORD, respecting

\* Matt. vi. 31. † Matt. vi. 11.

respecting the manna, that “*an omer of it should be kept for their generations.*”

The manifest intent and purpose of this law was doubtless to preserve amongst the children of Israel, to remote ages, a “*perpetual remembrance*” of that Divine Mercy which had showered down upon them the heavenly food for their support in the wilderness.

The same divine law is still in force amongst the children of GOD, the *true Israelites* of all times and places, who, in their journey through the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan, have ever tasted of the blessed manna of the Divine Grace and Love for their comfort and support.

They also are required, “*to keep an omer of this manna for their generations;*” in other words, it is the will of their heavenly FATHER, that they should store up well in their minds the *remembrance of His mercies*; that so no grace, no favour, no consolation, no deliverance, may at any future time be forgotten; but, that recollecting *past* assistances, they may have a firmer reliance on *future* aid; that having perpetually before their eyes the loving-kindnesses of the LORD, and the infinite value of His gifts, they may be the less dazzled with the splendid vanity of lesser things; that, in short, seeing at all times an eternal good presented to their view and acceptance, they may be both more watchful and more strong to resist the temptations, and overcome



come the dangers arising from the allurements of temporal goods.

Alas! what infinite loss do some Christians suffer in their spiritual concerns, for want of attending to the wisdom of this salutary law! Perhaps it is not going too far, to say, that all the wickedness which we have to deplore in the world around us, and in every individual who composes that world, is owing to the non-observance of this heaven-born law. Perhaps it is not going too far, to say, that we should every one of us make more rapid advances in the heavenly, the blessed life of holy love, and wisdom and charity, if we were more careful to live by the tenor of this law. For certain it is, that the **GREAT** and **BLESSED** GOD showers down the heavenly manna of His grace upon us all alike, upon the thankful and unthankful, upon the just and the unjust. But here is the difference: The unthankful and unjust, taste indeed at times of the *heavenly manna*, but then they do not store it up for future remembrance. They suffer the good thoughts and desires of to-day, to be dissipated and lost by the cares and vanities of to-morrow. For the moment, perhaps, they are made sensible of the infinite value of the promises of GOD, of the superior excellence of His grace and love, of the exceeding danger of continuing in their corruptions, of the unstableness and transitoriness of temporal joys, and for the moment, perhaps, are resolved to live new lives, and devote themselves henceforth entirely

tirely to the service of their **MAKER**; but alas! for want of *treasuring up* these heavenly impressions by penitence and seriousness in their inner man; for want of *retaining them fast in future remembrance*, by a devout practice joined to heavenly meditation, they presently lose again all sense and recollection of the blessed food they had begun to taste; the world and their passions thus return upon them with fresh force, and they *forget GOD who had begun to do so great things for them*.

Beloved, may this never be the unhappy case with any amongst us! When **GOD** at any time puts into our hearts good desires, may we be careful to cherish and to preserve the recollection of them for ever! When he feeds us with the *hidden manna* of His grace and benediction, may we never lose the remembrance of these His astonishing mercies! If a man gives us a sum of gold, we do not so easily forget the favour, nor lose the recollection of our benefactor. Yet what is all the gold in the bowels of the earth, to be compared with a single good desire from **GOD**? Gold can only purchase for us a few temporal short-lived gratifications, but has no power at all to make us truly happy; whereas a single good desire from **GOD**, this brings along with it inward peace and joy, and solid satisfaction, because it raises us above our defilements, it inspires us with the life of **JESUS CHRIST**, it exalts us to that **GREAT GOD**, and opens to us His kingdom of heaven and immortality. Shall we then  
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receive this true gold from GOD, and cast it away again as a vile thing as soon as we have received it? Shall GOD inspire us with good thoughts about Himself, His kingdom, and our eternal peace, and shall we suffer the devil, the world, and our passions, to rob us again of these precious treasures, and plunge us thereby into poverty, distress and death? Rather let us store up in our inner man the remembrance of the good things we have received, that so we may be led to desire and receive more. Let us be often looking at these treasures of heaven, recollecting that all other treasures will presently fail us; that the world passeth away and the glory thereof; that eternity is fast approaching; and that in a few years none will be or be called happy but those, of whom it is written, "*I remembered Thy judgments, O LORD, and received comfort.*"\*  
**AMEN.**

\* Psalm cxix. 52.



## SERMON XII.

On the want of Water, and it's miraculous supply from the Rock in Horeb.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N several former discourses on these words, we have attended the chosen people of GOD out of the land of Egypt, till they come into the wilderness, through which they were to pass, in the way to the promised land.

This wilderness, it has been already shown, was a striking figure of the trials and temptations which the people and children of GOD undergo, in all ages and places, during their journey to their promised land, the land of righteousness and peace in GOD, to which they are introduced by repentance and regeneration.

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The *first* trial or temptation, which the children of Israel underwent in their wilderness, it has been already seen, was the trial of the *bitter waters of Marah*, which were afterwards rendered sweet; the *second* was, *the want of bread*, which want was relieved by the raining down of manna, for their support and nourishment.

We come now to the consideration of a *third* trial or temptation, which befel this peculiar people, and which is thus expressed in the Divine Records :  
*“ And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim; and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us, and our children, and cattle, with thirst? And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel: and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out*

*out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?\**

There are two things in this account of the utmost importance to be well attended to, and which, therefore, demand the most serious consideration of all Christians ;

The *first* is the *want of water*.

The *second* is the *relief of this want by Moses's striking the rock in Horeb*.

We shall begin with the consideration of the *want of water*.

It has been already shown, from the authority of St. Paul, that all things which befel the children of Israel in the wilderness, were *types* or *figures* of spiritual things which befel the true Church of GOD in all ages and places—" *These things,*" saith the Apostle, "*happened unto them for ensamples,*" that is to say, for *types* or *figures*, as the original expression implies.

This is the case with *water, and the want of water*, which on the present occasion befel the children of Israel at Rephidim—it also is a type, or figure, and this a most striking and edifying one, of a similar, but spiritual want, which at times befalls the Church of GOD, and every true member of the  
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\* Exod. xvii. 1 to 8.

Church, in all ages and places, for their purification.

I am well aware that in the ears of the mere natural man, who has never been accustomed to raise his thoughts out of natural images, to the contemplation of those spiritual, those eternal realities from which all natural things are derived—I am well aware, I say, that in the ears of such a man, it will at first hearing sound exceedingly strange to be told that water and the want of water are figures of spiritual things; and he will probably ask the old question of the unbeliever on such occasion, *How can these things be?\**

But, beloved, permit me to suggest, that the blindness of the natural man as to the things of GOD is no reason at all why we should shut our eyes to the light of the eternal truth: It is, surely, rather a reason why we should open them to the brightness of that light, lest we also should perish in darkness. When the eyes of the prophet Ezechiel were opened of old to see the vision of the holy temple and house of the MOST HIGH, we read that among other striking figures, he saw *waters issue out from the threshold of the house Eastward:*† And when the Evangelist St. John, in like manner, had his eyes opened to see the *holy city descend from GOD out of heaven*, he saw also, among other things, *a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of GOD and of the LAMB.*‡ But can

\* John iii 9    † Ezech. xlvii. 1.    ‡ Rev. xxii. 1.



can any one now have his understanding so closed, and his apprehension so gross, as to imagine that the *waters* here seen by the prophet and by the evangelist were such *material* and *dead* waters as we see and drink here on earth? Is it not rather plain, as the sun at noon-day, that these *waters* must have been *spiritual* and *living waters*, those holy streams of heavenly wisdom and truth of which it is written, that they *make glad the city of GOD*,\* and of which JESUS CHRIST speaks, when He says, “*He that drinketh of the water which I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*”† And in another place, “*He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*”‡ Here we are expressly told by the Sovereign Truth, that there is *spiritual*, there is *living water*, as well as that which is *natural* and *dead*; consequently that the natural and dead water, which we see with our bodily eyes, and drink with our bodily organs, is but a figure or image of that *spiritual* that *living water*, which the SAVIOUR of the world gives to all those who believe in Him. The question now is, Will we believe JESUS CHRIST, or the natural man? Will we suffer our understandings to be opened by the eternal truth to the contemplation of those spiritual realities, which all natural things were intended to present to our view, or will we close

\* Psalm xli. 4. † John iv. 14. ‡ John vii. 38.

close our eyes against the comforts of that light, by remaining in the darkness of our own natural apprehensions?

If we are foolish enough still to continue in our natural blindness, we shall then see nothing in the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness, but a history of mere natural events, and their *want of water*, as well as its *supply*, will be regarded in no further view. Thus we shall deprive ourselves of all the interesting instruction intended of GOD to be handed down to us by these most striking and edifying images. But if we are wise to suffer our eyes to be opened by the eternal wisdom to the knowledge of the truth, we shall then be enabled to discern something more in the journeys of GOD's people than a mere history of natural occurrences, and something more in their *want of water* than a mere natural want. For we shall then see that the *want of water* is a most significative figure, and that it was appointed such of GOD for our instruction: We shall discern, I say, that when the children of Israel wanted water in the wilderness, it was a striking type of that want of *spiritual* and *living water*, which JESUS CHRIST gives to the faithful, viz. the divine truth of His Holy Word, for their purification and salvation. We shall perceive further, that as the *material* water which we drink with our bodies, is absolutely necessary for the support of *bodily* life, and also for bodily cleansing; in like manner the *spiritual* or *living* water of the divine truth

truth is absolutely necessary for the support of spiritual or eternal life, and also for it's cleansing. Thus we shall be brought to a fit state of mind to contemplate and understand that extraordinary miracle wrought by Moses for the relief of the children of Israel in the wilderness, which was the second thing intended for our present consideration.

It is impossible to conceive a more sublime or awful spectacle than what is presented to our view on this singular occasion.

An immense multitude of people are ready to perish with thirst in a barren and desolate wilderness. Their leader, unable of himself to relieve their want, applies in supplication to the ALMIGHTY. His supplication prevails, and the ALMIGHTY directs him to take the elders of Israel, and the rod with which he had formerly smitten the river in Egypt, and go and smite the rock in Horeb, adding this memorable promise, "*There shall come water out of the rock, that the people may drink.*" Moses accordingly smites the rock in the sight of the elders of Israel; the promise of GOD is accomplished; the rock pours forth streams of water, and the thirsty multitudes are instantly refreshed and satisfied.

How magnificent and affecting is the whole of this relation, and what a copious store of heavenly and edifying contemplations do all it's circumstances supply to the devout mind! How plain nevertheless is it to see, that it's magnificence and it's importance will vary with various minds, and that every

one will be affected by it according to his own state, that is to say, according as he is disposed to think only *naturally*, or to think also *spiritually*! He who is disposed only to think *naturally*, (as is the case with all those who are unwilling to raise their ideas out of mere natural things and images, to the contemplation of those spiritual and eternal realities in which all natural and temporal things originate;) such a one, I say, will discern nothing in the *want of water* amongst the children of Israel, but the mere want of that material element which was necessary to allay bodily thirst; and nothing also in the supply of this want by *smiting the rock, at Horeb*, in obedience to the command of GOD, but a supply of elementary water for bodily uses. Thus he will confine his views to the mere things of nature, and forgetting that the intention of the GREAT and HOLY GOD, in every part of His Divine Word, and under all it's natural images, is to elevate the devout reader to a sight and apprehension of spiritual and eternal objects, he will frustrate in himself the purposes of the ALMIGHTY, and closing his eyes against the brightness of Divine Truth, will plunge headlong into the darkness of his own mere natural apprehensions.

Not so the pious and enlightened Christian, who has been taught to think spiritually of the Word of the MOST HIGH, and to elevate his ideas out of natural shadows and images to contemplate those eternal substances and realities in which they originate.

nate. When he reads, therefore, of the thirsty multitude in the wilderness, ready to perish for want of water, he is led by this image to the consideration of the Church of GOD in it's wilderness state, ready to perish for want of that *spiritual*, that *living water* of heavenly truth, of which the elementary water of this world is but the type and figure. When again he beholds the leader of GOD's chosen people, in the presence of the elders of Israel, lift up his consecrated rod to smite the rock in Horeb, recollecting the declaration of the Apostle Paul, that *that rock was Christ*,\* he no longer thinks of the rock in the wilderness only, but passing through this figure to it's divine antitype, his mind is elevated to the *rock of his salvation*, whose name is JESUS CHRIST. When again, he views the marvellous effects of smiting the rock by the rod of Moses, and sees the plentiful streams of refreshing water issue from their smitten source, again his spiritual mind is exalted to the contemplation of other streams, infinitely more refreshing, which issue from that other spiritual rock infinitely more memorable. For he recollects, that there is a water called *the water of life*,† which is possessed of divine virtues not to be found in the elementary water of this world. He recollects further, that JESUS CHRIST is the blessed, the eternal source of that *living water*, and that whosoever comes to this God-like *rock*, and smites it with that true faith, which was figured by  
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\* 1 Corinth. x. 4. † Zech. xiv. 8. Rev. xxii. 1.

the rod of Moses, he also finds a plentiful stream beginning to flow—he drinks of the heavenly element of eternal truth and consolation—he is strengthened, refreshed, revived, and lives for ever.

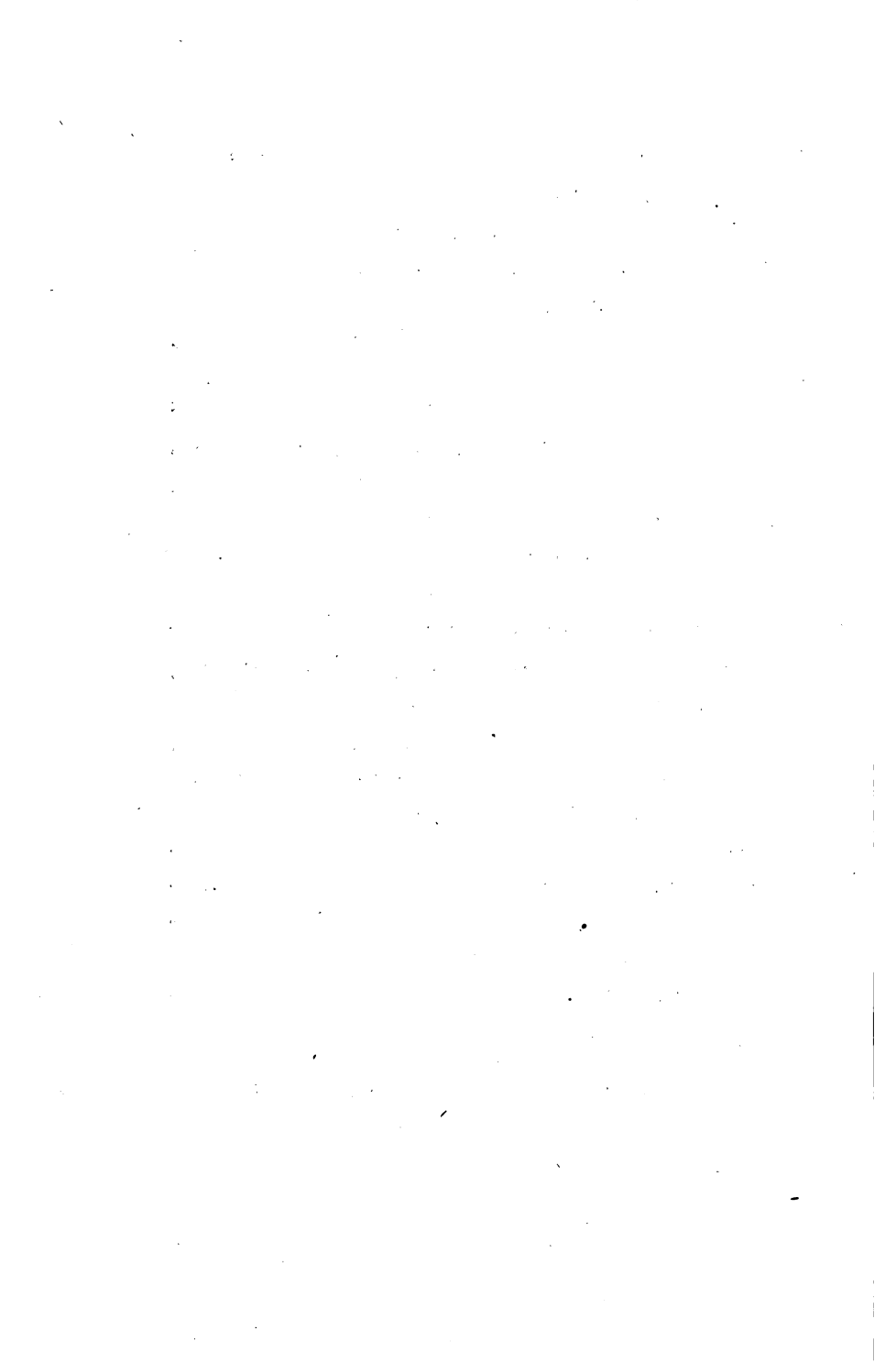
Beloved, it remains for us to choose what shall in future be our thought and view of the miracle under consideration. It remains for us, I say, to choose, whether we will look at the *shadow* only, or at the *substance* also; whether we will be content with receiving merely the *dead figure* into our memories, which will leave us as dead as itself, or will proceed further, and incorporate the *Divine reality* into our *lives*, by virtue whereof we also shall *live*, agreeable to the words of JESUS CHRIST, “*Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto eternal life.*”

Permit me only, in the way of conclusion, and as a means of leading to a right determination of our choice, briefly to suggest, that there perhaps never was a time when Christians, through the prevalence of a vain philosophy originating in the spirit of worldly-mindedness and darkness, were more exposed to danger in making such determination, than the present time: neither can there be conceived any subject of determination more important than the subject in question, because it is to determine, whether we will believe the Word of GOD to be *living* or to be *dead*, to be *spirit* or to be *matter*,

ter, to contain eternal realities of heavenly truth, or a mere temporal detail of historical facts. Such is the interesting subject of our present decision, and the decision moreover rests between GOD and our own consciences. There never, therefore, was a time, or occasion, when Christians had more need to seek divine aid to help them to decide aright.

May then the spirit of GOD direct and enable us all to make the right determination! May we no longer listen to the dictates of that false and vain philosophy of the day, which would level the Word of GOD with the word of man, but rejecting all such impieties of human speculation and science, may we rather be disposed to listen to the unerring declarations of the eternal truth, which hath said, "*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;*"\* and believing this to be the case, and that God will not, and cannot deceive us, may we in the next place be led, in the sincerity of deep humiliation and repentance, to cast ourselves at the feet of Him, who once "*opened the understandings of His disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures,*"† praying with the holy man of old, "*Open thou mine eyes that I may see the wondrous things of thy law.*"‡ AMEN.

\* John vi. 63. † Luke xxvi. 45. ‡ Psalm cxix. 18.





## SERMON XIII.

On Amalek coming up to fight with Israel.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N treating on these words, we have heretofore attended the chosen people of **GOD** out of the land of Egypt, until they come into the wilderness, and begin to be distressed for want of water.

We have noticed also the miracle wrought by the **ALMIGHTY** for their relief on this sad occasion, and how in consequence of smiting the rock in **Ho-reb** by the consecrated rod of **Moses**, the waters instantly gushed out, and the people were refreshed and revived by the copious stream.

It was further shown, how the waters thus miraculously called forth from the rock in the wilderness, were instructively and beautifully figurative of those *living waters* of heavenly truth and consolation, which

which flow forth from the glorified body of the **GREAT REDEEMER** for the refreshment of His thirsty people, whensoever they, like Moses of old, draw nigh unto this *rock of their salvation*, and smite it with the sacred rod of penitent prayer and faith.

We now proceed to the consideration of another circumstance, which occurred in the journey of this memorable people, and which will be found no less interesting and edifying than any of the foregoing.

It is related in these words, "*Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose 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.*"\*

It is plain to see how differently these words will be understood by different people, and what a variety of thought they will excite, according to the various states of mind in which they are read or heard. They, for instance, who have been accustomed to regard the Word of GOD only as containing a history of external facts, like the histories written by men, and have never elevated their minds to any more spiritual and divine meaning contained in those facts, will discover nothing in the above relation but the records of a battle; and will therefore be no more affected and edified by it, than by  
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\* Exod. xvii. 8 to 11.

the account of any other battle recorded by the pen of the human historian.

But the sincere Christian, who, through repentance and faith in the **GREAT REDEEMER**, has had his eyes opened to see, that the Word of **GOD** must needs contain in it the wisdom of **GOD**, and that the wisdom of **GOD** must needs have a deeper and more divine meaning in it's language than the wisdom of man—such a sincere Christian, I say, on hearing or reading the above account of *Amalek fighting with Israel*, will be led to discern something more in this relation than the mere history of a battle, and something more in the victory of the people of **GOD**, than the record of a mere human victory.

For he will be enlightened to see, that when **GOD**, in His Holy Word, speaks of enemies, of battles, and of victories, He can never mean only such enemies, battles, and victories, as are recorded in the writings of men, for then His book would only be like the books of men; but He must needs mean *spiritual* enemies, *spiritual* battles, and *spiritual* victories, such as relate to Himself and to His spiritual kingdom; and that unless He had such a spiritual meaning in what He says, His Word could never in any sense be called holy and divine, but must needs be merely a natural and human record; like the words and writings of human historians.

He will discern, therefore, that all the enemies of the children of Israel of old, all their battles and

all their victories, as recorded in the Word of GOD, though they really existed and had place in this world of nature, yet are they *types* and *figures*, and were intended to be such of *spiritual* enemies, of *spiritual* battles, and of *spiritual* victories; and that it is this wonderful circumstance, which distinguishes the Word of GOD from all other writings whatsoever, and indeed which constitutes it the Word of GOD, since if this circumstance was not so, then what is called the Word of GOD would have in it no more of divinity, of sanctity, of spirituality and of life, than the writings of wise and enlightened men.

As for example—What divinity, what sanctity, what spirituality, and what life, shall we say, is contained in the history before us, where it is written, “*Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim,*” whilst we suppose that Amalek means nothing more than Amalek, and that by fighting with Israel in Rephidim is signified nothing more than a mere battle between two armies of men collected together at a particular place of that name? JESUS CHRIST says, “*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.*”\* And the Apostle declares, “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*”† But what *spirit* or *life*; what *doctrine*, what *reproof*, what *correction*, or *instruction in righteousness*

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\* John vi. 63. † 2 Tim, iii. 16.

ness is to be found in these words, "*Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim,*" if we look no further than to the letter of them? Besides, can we believe it worthy of the **GREAT** and **HOLY GOD** to give us a history of combat, of enmity, and of destruction, unless he had some deeper, some more edifying and interesting meaning in what he said? Can we suppose that the **Word of GOD**, which really proceeds from **GOD**, and was intended to lead us to **GOD**, would be so full of accounts of nations rising up against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms, to butcher and destroy each other, unless those accounts had been significative of something more spiritual and more holy? Surely common sense must see, that to make **GOD** the historian of a battle, and His **Word** the record of bloodshed and slaughter, without any deeper meaning, is in the grossest manner to dishonour and disparage both **GOD** and His **Word**.

There is the more need, beloved, for every Christian at this day to examine well his ideas and sentiments concerning the **WORD OF GOD** in the above respect, and to take heed that they be well-grounded, inasmuch as there is reason to apprehend, that the offence so commonly taken at this time against the revelation of the **ALMIGHTY**, is much increased and confirmed by the gross and corporeal sentiments and ideas which men entertain on the subject, And here I do not mean to advert only to the cavils of the profane, and to the scoffs of the  
 infidels,

infidels, who are against the Word of GOD, because the Word of GOD is against them and their vices ; but I mean to extend the observation even to many of the serious professors of the religion of JESUS CHRIST, who yet, for want of discerning that GOD's words are not as man's words, but that GOD's words at all times express spiritual ideas by natural images, are led to doubt at least, if not to deny in many cases, the sanctity and divinity of the holy and eternal records : Thus it is no uncommon thing to hear some, even amongst those who call themselves believers, expressing both surprise and offence at many passages in the Psalms of David, because, say they, his language is bitter and uncharitable against his *enemies* ; not recollecting that when David speaks of his enemies, he always means his *spiritual* enemies, the powers of sin and darkness, and therefore all his invectives and maledictions are to be understood as applying only against the enemies of GOD and of His kingdom and salvation.

But, beloved, let us learn to interpret aright the language of the MOST HIGH, that we *may not be offended at it*. Let us for this purpose, in the spirit of sincere repentance and conversion, apply ourselves to JESUS CHRIST, to teach us the true interpretation. We shall then be enabled to see what the Word of GOD is, and what it means. We shall behold it as the repository of the eternal wisdom and most holy will of the ALMIGHTY let down from heaven amongst us, to communicate

to us also the life and the light of heaven ; we shall look at it with inexpressible delight, as at a rich casket or cabinet, containing jewels of inestimable value for our ornament and use : But then we shall be taught to take proportionable heed that we do not at any time judge of this treasure-house from it's *outside* only, but from the *jewels and precious stones* that are contained within ; in other words, we shall be careful not to form our judgment and ideas from the *letter* alone, but from the *spirit*, not from the *dead history*, but from the *living sense and meaning* which that history contains.

Then will the book of GOD become indeed to us a *book of life*, and every page, and every sentence of every page will communicate *life and righteousness and joy* from GOD to us, as it was originally intended to do. For then no longer looking at the *casket* or *cabinet* only, but unlocking also the holy repository of the precious pearls of wisdom stored up therein for our use, we shall adorn and enrich ourselves with the blessed treasure, and shall be convinced that all the gold and silver and precious stones of the earth are but as dross, when compared with these heavenly and eternal riches, agreeable to the testimony of the holy man of old, where speaking of the contents of the sacred records, he saith, "*More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold.*"\*

As for example, and to apply these observations to the subject under consideration—When we read  
in

\* Psalm xix. 10.

in the history of the journeys of GOD's people of old, that *Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim*, if we are wise to look for the *pearls* of the wisdom of GOD in these words, we shall no longer think of a people called *Amalek* only, nor of a battle, but we shall be led to think of the *spiritual adversaries* of GOD and of GOD's people, in all ages, places and times: thus we shall have our eyes open to see into the invisible world, and to behold those legions of infernal foes and destroyers who daily and hourly meditate our ruin. We shall be led also to reflect on those *spiritual combats* which GOD Himself when here upon earth endured, and which all His faithful followers endure, against sin and the powers of darkness. Thus the enemies of the children of Israel of old will bring to our view the enemies of our own salvation; and the *Amalek* which opposed them, will call to our recollection that more terrible *Amalek*, the innumerable host of diabolical principles and persuasions from beneath, which are always ready to oppose our progress to the heavenly Canaan. And thus also the combats and victories of the wandering Israelites under their leader Moses, will remind us of, and call us to accomplish the more important combats and more glorious victories to which we are called under the captain of our salvation, whilst we put upon "*us the whole armour of GOD, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*"\*

To

\* Ephes. vi. 11.



To conclude—It is greatly to be feared that few Christians at this day have right ideas either of their *spiritual adversaries*, or of the nature and necessity of *spiritual combat*, or the rewards of *spiritual victory*. The truth is, deadly and destructive doctrines have of late been circulated in the Christian Church, which tend to extinguish every ray of spiritual light on those important subjects, by teaching, either that we have no spiritual enemies to fear, or that we are not called to wage war against them, or that we may conquer without engaging in the combat. Hence the generality of Christians, there is reason to apprehend, are not so much upon their guard, as they would otherwise be ; and for want of seeing their danger they fall asleep in a false and fatal security ; for want too of being apprized of the glorious conquests to which they are called, they never enter into that combat which should conduct them to the rewards of victory. And yet the Word of GOD (we must be forced to confess, if we examine the sacred records) hath given us faithful warning on these, as well as on all other points that so much concern us. We cannot open a page of the Holy Volume, without being struck forcibly with the conviction thereby excited, that we are encompassed continually with an host of enemies ; that “ *the devil like a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour ;*”\* that it is necessary, therefore, to be upon our guard, and to use the  
 weapons

\* 1 Pet. v. 8.

weapons of spiritual warfare for our defence; and lastly, that the reward of victory is given *to him that overcometh*,\* and to him only; whilst the careless, the slothful, and the timorous, fall a prey to their adversaries and are torn in pieces. Accordingly, in the office which our Church has appointed for the baptism of her children, we are taught to pray for every child, “*That he may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh.*”

Who then amongst us believeth this testimony of the MOST HIGH GOD? Who amongst us is faithful to the prayer which was offered up for him at his baptism? Let him believe, as the Scripture assures him, that a *lion* is always at his side, that a most poisonous and deadly *serpent* is ever ready to *bruise his heel*. Let him fancy that he sees *Amalek* continually coming out to oppose his way to the heavenly Canaan; and let him believe further, that the wars which are at this day desolating the Christian world, like the battle with *Amalek* and Israel of old, are *types* and *figures*, and intended to be such of those more terrible spiritual combats and convulsions which are now desolating the Christian Church, and threaten destruction to every individual. But let him not still be discouraged. Let him look unto Him who hath promised to fight for him, and to defend him, and who on this account calls Himself *the GOD of armies, and a man of war*. Let him

\* Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; chap. iii. 5, 12, 21.

him fight valiantly as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST, and let him remember for his encouragement, that the most splendid trophies of human victory ; the brightest laurels which ever yet adorned the brow of the most distinguished conquerer here on earth ; all these fade away and become inglorious when compared with the triumphs of that humble Christian, who entering into the combat against himself and his passions, and gaining the victory over the powers of darkness, hears that happy salutation of his GOD, "*Thou hast been faithful unto death ; I will give thee a crown of life.*"\* AMEN.

\* Rev. ii. 10.



## SERMON XIV.

**On Moses, Aaron, and Hur, at the top of the Hill, whilst the Battle below is determined by the holding up and letting down of Moses's Hands.**

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we left the children of Israel in the wilderness, fighting with *Amalek in Rephidim*, after suggesting such reflections on the nature of this *enemy*, and this *battle*, as seemed best calculated to open and explain to us the wisdom of the **MOST HIGH**, contained in this and other similar accounts of combat and warfare in His Holy Word.

We shall now proceed to the consideration of a very extraordinary and interesting circumstance attending

tending this battle between Israel and Amalek, which, if duly attended to, will not fail further to convince every well-disposed mind, that the WORD OF GOD contains in it the most wonderful mysteries of divine and heavenly Wisdom, and that all the natural events recorded in the Sacred Volume, though they really came to pass and were fulfilled in this world of nature, yet involved in them spiritual instruction, and are therefore the records of the operations of the eternal truth or grace of JESUS Christ, in human minds, in all ages and places.

The circumstance I allude to is expressed in these words, "*Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of a hill: and it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, then Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, then Amalek prevailed. But Moses's 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.*"\*

There are three things in this account which demand our particular consideration :

First, That the success of the battle in the valley depended on what was doing at the top of the hill which overlooked it ;

Secondly, That it depended on this singular and *apparently*

\* Exod. xvii. 10 to 14.

*apparently* trivial circumstance, the *holding up*, or *letting down of Moses's hands*;

Thirdly, The methods taken to stay up the hands of this leader of the people of GOD.

Let us begin with the first of these considerations, viz. that the success of the battle in the valley depended on what was doing at the top of the hill which overlooked it.

This was manifestly the case in the history before us, for we read, that "*when Moses held up his hand, then Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, then Amalek prevailed;*" whence it is plain, that the success of the combatants in the valley did not depend merely on their own courage or exertions, howsoever it might seem to themselves to do so, but it depended upon what was transacting in a remote place by an unseen agent, whose operations (if we were to judge from human appearances only) had no manner of connection with the events to which they gave birth.

And what a striking figure is this, of the disposal and regulation of all contingencies at this day, by an agency superior to man, controlling every human event according to it's own eternal counsels, notwithstanding the appearance that those events depend upon the counsels, contrivances, and determinations, of mere human agents!

We, alas! in our folly and short-sightedness, are but too apt to overlook, if not entirely to forget, the mysterious connection here announced between  
human

human and Divine operation. Blinded by an inordinate self-love, or by a fatal attachment to mere temporal and sensual gratifications, we are too often unwilling to lift up our eyes to look up to yonder hill, the elevated abode of the Supreme Intelligence, which at once discerns, directs, and governs the various concerns of this lower world, and it's multiplied inhabitants. We fancy, alas! that all depends upon ourselves; on our own skill, or our own abilities, or, what is still more fantastical, on what is called *chance*, or *accident*, not recollecting that both ourselves, our skill, and our abilities, are mere instruments in the hands of an almighty power; and that what we frequently call chance, or mischance, is in reality nothing less than the effect of a Divine and super-intending Providence ordering all things, as far as possible, for our good. Thus, deceived by appearances, we suffer ourselves to be perpetually imposed upon, and what is still more to our disadvantage, because attended with more danger to our best interests, we, not unfrequently, act upon these false conclusions of a deluded judgment, and thereby plunge down the precipice of our ruin, when we are least aware.

But, beloved, let us suffer the eternal Word of the MOST HIGH to open our eyes to the light of that higher and better wisdom, which it was intended to communicate unto us. Let us be taught hereby to look continually unto that holy *Hill from whence cometh our strength*. Let us recollect WHO it is that  
that



that is seated on that hill, what are His purposes, and what the means of their accomplishment: and in all our successes and prosperities, whether spiritual or temporal; in all our adversities too, our calamities, our distresses, our difficulties, and perplexities, whether relating to this world or another, let us remember that our valley is at all times overshadowed by the mountain of the LORD OF HOSTS, whose eyes are ever open to all our most minute concerns, and whose Divine Providence, if we have respect unto it, will never suffer *Amalek* to prevail, only so far as may be needful to increase, in the end, the splendour and joy of our triumphs.

But, secondly, The success of the combat between Israel and Amalek, did not depend only on what was doing at the top of the hill, but it depended also on this singular, and *apparently* trivial circumstance, the *holding up* or *letting down* of *Moses's hands*.

In treating on this remarkable history of the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their journey through the wilderness, we have had frequent occasion heretofore to observe, that all the circumstances which befel them, as the Apostle testifies, were *types* or *figures*, of spiritual things, and that in this view *they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*.

This observation is verified, in a particular manner, in the circumstance under consideration, viz. the *holding up* and *letting down* of the hands of *Moses*:

*Moses*: For who cannot see, that on this occasion both *Moses* and his *hands*, both their *holding up* and their *letting down*, were but representative figures of things infinitely higher, that is to say, of things Divine? For *Moses*, it is plain, was but a man, like ourselves, and therefore it cannot be supposed that there was any particular virtue in his hands, more than in those of other men, to determine, by their *rising* and *falling*, the issue of a most important combat. Yet both *Moses* and his hands might be figures of a GREATER than *Moses*, and of *Hands* infinitely more powerful: And so, there is every reason to believe, they were; and that the ALMIGHTY exhibited, on this occasion, such a striking figure of Himself, and of His operations, in order to instruct mankind, in all succeeding ages, concerning the nature of His kingdom, and the œconomy of His providence.

But what shall we say is the language which this figure speaks? What is the sublime lesson of wisdom which it announces to us? Surely, if we are desirous to receive the instructions of the MOST HIGH, and to profit by them, it is impossible we can any of us be so dull of apprehension as not to discern, what the ALMIGHTY herein meant to teach us. It is impossible, I say, that we cannot see, that the *holding up of Moses's hands* is a striking sign and figure, and was intended to be such, that in all our spiritual combats we ought to have respect, at all times, to the Omnipotence of GOD, in which case the victory, on every occasion, is

our's; as on the contrary, the *letting down of Moses's hands* is a sign and figure equally plain and striking, that we do not respect that Omnipotence, in which case, the battle is sure to go against us.

It is impossible, therefore, that we cannot discern further, that GOD, by this sign and figure, designed to teach us, that if we wish, at any time, for success, either in our spiritual or temporal concerns, then we ought to make it our principal care to consult His OMNIPOTENCE, and engage it to favour us: He designed, I say, to teach us, that disappointment, distress, losses, ruin, both in what relates to this world, and to another, must ever be the fatal consequences of confiding in ourselves, in our own guidance, or in our own strength; because, in such case, the Hands of the MOST HIGH will assuredly be *let down*, and His providence cannot work with us: Whereas, if we are wise to take Him for our counsellor, and our strength, and to put our whole trust in His divine guidance and protection, then His Divine *Hands* will be continually *lifted up* over us, and we shall "*be in all things more than conquerors, through Him who helpeth us.*"

And this leads me to the *third* and last particular, proposed for our consideration, viz. the methods taken to *stay up the hands* of the leader of the people of GOD.

On this subject it is thus written in the history under consideration, "*But Moses's 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."*

Behold here other *types* and *figures* equally striking and edifying as the foregoing! Behold, I say, the appointed methods necessary for lifting up the hands of the ALMIGHTY, and thereby attaining all that heavenly security and blessing, which it is in vain to look for from any other source! For how plain is it to discern from the history under consideration, that if the divine hands are to be lifted up *over* us, they must be lifted up *by* us; in other words, we must do something in the way of exertion on *our* parts, otherwise the hands of GOD, like the hands of Moses, become as it were *heavy*, and fall down, and cannot accomplish the purposes which they were intended to do. JESUS CHRIST instructs us in the necessity of such *co-operation* with the ETERNAL for our salvation, when He saith of Himself, "*My FATHER worketh hitherto, and I work:*"\* For if, in accomplishing the great purposes of the union of the two natures, the Divine and human, in the person of the BLESSED JESUS, there was an expediency of mutual exertions on the part of each principle to effect it, how reasonable is it to suppose, that in accomplishing the similar purpose of our conjunction with the FATHER of our being, there is a similar expediency

\* John v. 17.

diency of *reciprocal* energy, endeavour, and operation !

For what eye cannot see that it is the continual manifest purpose of the **ALMIGHTY** to bless *all* the children of men, by lifting up over them continually the hands of His blessing and omnipotence? But whence comes it to pass now, that *all* mankind do not *alike* receive this intended blessing of their **FATHER** and their **GOD**? Whence comes it to pass, I say, that some even convert the intended blessing into a curse, and change "*the things which should have been for their wealth, into an occasion of falling?*" We cannot give any reasonable answer to these questions but this, that such people do not join their ability with the ability of **GOD**, nor their purpose with the purposes of **GOD**; in other words, they do not *co-operate*, or *work together* with the **ALMIGHTY**, for their salvation and prosperity; in which case, both the intention and the power of the **OMNIPOTENT** must needs be made to them of none effect, for, as the Scriptures of truth perpetually testify, it is absolutely impossible for man to receive a *real* blessing from **GOD**, that is to say, the blessing of His eternal love and wisdom, unless he be *desirous* and *willing* to receive it: accordingly it is written, "*Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,*"\* to teach us this instructive lesson, that every thing depends upon the tendency and motion of our own *will*, whether it be towards **GOD**, or from **GOD**.

If

\* Matt. xv. 28.

If it be towards GOD, we then join ourselves with the operation of GOD, and, in this case, the Divine Hands are said to be *lifted up*, because they are rendered operative in our favour; but if it be *from* GOD, we then separate ourselves from and oppose the Divine operation, and in this case the Divine Hands are said to be *let down*, because they cannot operate to the accomplishment of their own purposes, as it is written in another place, “ *He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief,*”\* which is a manifest proof how the state of man’s mind affects the operations of GOD.

Here then, if we are so disposed, we may be enabled to see, not only that something is necessary to be done on our parts, but also what that something is which is necessary to be done, in order to keep the Hands of the ALMIGHTY ever *lifted up* over us for security, for blessing, and salvation.

We may discern, I say, that if we are desirous to experience the fulfilment of the purposes of the ALMIGHTY, we must then do, as Aaron and Hur did in regard to Moses, we must take “ *a stone, and put it under him, and he must be seated thereon;*” in other words, there must be the exercise of a *living and operating faith* on our parts, of which that stone was the significative figure; and we must further imitate the conduct of Aaron and Hur by *staying up his hands with our hands*, in other words, we must join our abilities with the ability of GOD,

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\* Matt. xiii. 58.

our purposes with the purpose of GOD, if we ever hope that either the purpose or the ability of GOD should be profitable to us, agreeable to those words of the great Redeemer, "*According to your faith be it unto you;*"\* and again, "*Abide in ME, and I in you.*"†

Behold here the blessed adorable means of keeping the hands of the MOST HIGH in a continual elevation over us, to the full and perfect accomplishment of all his merciful providences and intentions! Nothing is wanting to our blessedness either in this world or the next, but that we should conspire with the designs of heaven and it's LORD for that happy end. If we any of us perish, it can be for no other reason, but because we separate our own powers from the power of GOD, our own purposes from His purpose. Let us but learn to unite our wills with the Divine will, and our operations with the Divine operation; let us learn to take part with JESUS CHRIST *against* our corruptions, and to take part with him also in favour of those heavenly graces and virtues which he is willing to implant in the place of our corruptions; and from that moment all will infallibly go well with us. For from that moment *Amalek* will be discomfited, and *Israel* will prevail. All the *infernal enemies* of our peace and salvation will flee before us, and all our *heavenly friends* will exalt the banner of victory and protection over us. And in this case

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we shall do, as Moses of old did on this occasion, we shall "*build an altar, and call the name of it JEHOVAH-NISSI;*"\* in other words, we shall worship our **GOD** with never-failing praise and thanksgiving for all the wonders of **His** power, protection, and salvation. **AMEN.**

\* Exod. xvii. 15.



## SERMON XV.

### The Counsel of Jethro, or the great Laws of spiritual Subordination.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we took a view of the memorable circumstances which attended the battle between Israel and Amalek, and especially of that most remarkable *figure*, the *lifting up and letting down* of Moses's hands.

We come now to the consideration of another singular event respecting that distinguished people, whose history has so repeatedly been the subject of our former attention. For we read, that immediately after the victory obtained over Amalek, Jethro the priest of Midian, and father-in-law of Moses, *hearing of all that GOD had done for Moses, and for Israel His people*, came to visit them in the wilderness.

derness. We read further, how, being instructed of GOD, Jethro gave counsel to Moses respecting the government of the people over whom he was appointed; and especially respecting that *subordination of order* which was absolutely necessary for accomplishing the purposes of such government. For thus Jethro advises his son-in-law, "*Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear GOD, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge.*" And it is then added, "*That Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said.*"\*

There are two things in this account which demand our most especial attention and consideration, 1st. That in every well-ordered government it is necessary that there be a distinction and subordination of governors under one head.

2dly. That those several governors should derive their rank and authority, not from the people whom they govern, but from the head under which they govern.

These two points, I say, are clearly deducible from the above account, for if we believe our Bibles, we must be forced to believe also, that the govern-

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\* Exod. xviii. 18 to the end.

ment established amongst the children of Israel was the most perfect and best-ordered of any that could have been devised, as being immediately from GOD, and yet in this most perfect government we find, that there was a *distinction* and *subordination* of *governors under one head*, for we read of *rulers over thousands*, of *rulers over hundreds*, of *rulers over fifties*, and of *rulers over tens*, and that all these were under subjection to Moses as the supreme governor. We read further, that these several subordinate governors were not appointed by the people whom they were to govern, but they were appointed by Moses their head, for thus Jethro says to Moses, "*THOU shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear GOD, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers.*"

Was this a proper time and place, I might take occasion to point out, from the above description of a most perfect form of civil government, established by GOD Himself, the wild and visionary ideas on the subject, which have lately been propagated amongst us by thoughtless men, who, rejecting the wisdom of divine revelation, have had the dangerous presumption to exalt their own self-derived intelligence above the intelligence of the LORD of heaven. I might show how, by natural and necessary consequence, setting the feet above the head, or what amounts to the same thing, making the head dependant on the feet both for it's origin and it's authority, contrary to the counsel

and command of the MOST HIGH, they would invert the proper order of human society, and introduce a dreadful confusion into the whole system of civil administration. But as the discussion of these points would lead from the consideration of things more connected with the purposes of our present assembly, as well as with the sanctity of the place in which we are assembled, I shall at present beg leave to call your attention to another kind of government, of no less importance, viz. *the government of ourselves, and the order intended to be introduced into our own hearts and lives*, as deducible from the above advice of Jethro to his son-in-law Moses.

Every serious and considerate person, who has been accustomed to reflect at all, under any degree of holy influence, concerning the sacred contents of the WORD OF GOD, must needs be enabled to discern, that every page of that divine book, and every sentence of every page, in it's interior and spiritual meaning, must of necessity have reference to the *regeneration of man*, or what is the same thing, to man's restoration to a right order, that is, to a heavenly order of mind and of life, this being the grand and the primary end and intention of all the revelations of GOD.

Every serious and considerate person, therefore, who has been accustomed to read the WORD OF GOD under such a sacred persuasion of it's interior sanctities, must needs be enabled to see and discern further, that what is recorded in the above  
account

account concerning the advice of Jethró to Moses respecting the subordination of the children of Israel, by distinguishing them into *thousands*, into *hundreds*, into *fifties*, and into *tens*, and *setting rulers over them* according to such distinction— he must needs, I say, be enabled to see and discern, that this subordination of the people of GOD would never have found a place in the BOOK OF GOD, had it not involved in it another and a higher subordination, viz. that holy and blessed state of distinction, of order, and of wise government, which the people of GOD, in all ages and places, are still called to look for and to cherish in their own minds, as the only solid ground of protection, of salvation, and of peace.

Every such serious and considerate person, therefore, from reading the above account will be led to reflect immediately within himself on that pure order of heavenly and blessed life which it involves, and to examine himself in the presence of the GOD of that order, how far he has attained to it, or otherwise, in his own mind and life. And here, being enlightened by light from above (as must ever be the case with every one who reads the WORD OF GOD under a devout influence,) he will discover, so as to see clearly, that as there cannot possibly be exhibited a more dreadful scene of disorder, of confusion, and of insecurity, than what is displayed in the mind of man, before he admits and receives the blessed order of heaven, so on the  
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other hand, nothing can be conceived more beautiful, more harmonious, more secure and happy, than the state of the human mind and spirit, when brought into a right subordination to the spirit of heaven and of the GOD of heaven.

Let us stand still awhile to contemplate these two *pictures* which will perhaps best illustrate the subject under consideration; and first, let us take a view of the picture of *disorder*.

Behold then that thoughtless and unhappy man, who has never yet become a convert to the GOD of heaven, and has never yet, by self-examination and repentance, submitted himself to the order of heaven! Look attentively into his mind, so as to discern clearly what is passing there, and you will then see a chaos of confusion, of uproar, and of instability which will at once terrify and astonish you. For observe the crowd of his unarranged thoughts, the rabble of his uncontrolled passions, the mixed multitude of divers opposite affections and appetites, which no man can number, and which are unknown even to himself. You inquire naturally who is the ruler of all these various and contending principles, by what power are they governed, and to what end directed? But what is your surprise to find, that though you ask the man himself, he cannot answer you these questions; for alas! so far from being able to answer, he has never yet been at the pains even to make the inquiry. He is, therefore, an utter stranger to himself, so as not even to know

know what is the power which guides and rules him, whether it be from above or from beneath, from heaven or from hell. He persuades himself, indeed, that he guides and rules himself, because he *appears* to do so: But how plain is it to a discerning eye that he is imposed upon by this *appearance*, and that so far from being his own ruler and guide, he is continually under the tyranny and iron rod of his passions, his appetites, and corrupt affections, which alternately bear miserable sway, and lead him at their pleasure, whilst they themselves are led by the powers of darkness. In vain, therefore, in this distracted mind, do we look for a Moses with his rod of divine authority and peace, or for the *rulers of thousands*, or the *rulers of hundreds*, or the *rulers of fifties*, or the *rulers of tens*, for alas! nothing is to be seen but the reign of anarchy, a lawless kingdom, a scene of perpetual discord and rebellion, a world of tumult, of disturbance, and of insubordination, without a king and without a governor; and all for this single reason, because he has never consulted so as to introduce into himself the order of heaven, by evangelical repentance and conversion to the **GOD** of heaven.

But let us turn now from this disgusting and painful sight, to behold the fair picture of heavenly distinction, order and security, as it is displayed in the mind and life of the regenerate Christian.

JESUS Christ speaks of this picture, when He saith to His disciples, "*Ye have not chosen ME, but*

*but I have chosen you, and ORDAINED you, that ye should go, and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.*"\* The term *ordained* here used by our BLESSED LORD is expressed in the original by a word which signifies to *arrange in the most exact order*; so that JESUS CHRIST here teaches, that all His children have their minds *arranged by Him in such an order*, and that this is their qualification for *bringing forth fruit*, and that *their fruit should remain*.

Behold here an exact description of the interior state of every regenerate Christian! His mind is restored to the most beautiful and perfect order, and this order extends itself, not only to the *general*, but also to every *particular* thing contained in his mind. For his mind, like that of the disorderly person above described, consists of innumerable affections, thoughts, passions, and appetites; but then the striking difference between them is this, that in the mind of disorder all these principles are confused, uncontrolled and unarranged, whereas in this regenerate mind, each is distinct from the other, each knows its proper place, and each is under its proper governor. Indeed, regeneration properly considered, implies this restoration to the order of heaven, because regeneration properly considered is nothing else but the *descent* of that order into human minds, and its reproduction there. In the regenerate mind, therefore, you will always see thus displayed a picture

\* John xv. 16.



ture of heaven itself, because you will always see there the order of heaven, consisting in the most perfect, the most accurate distinctions and arrangements. I say *distinctions* as well as arrangements, because without distinction there can be no arrangement, and therefore it is the first work of GOD in the regenerate or well-ordered mind to make such distinctions, by discriminating in general between good and evil, between truth and error, as also between the several classes and degrees of each, whether spiritual, rational, or natural. You will always observe, therefore, in that mind, affection nicely distinguished from appetite, and appetite from passion; the love of GOD and heaven distinguished from self-love and the love of the world; the things of grace distinguished from those of nature, and the determinations of the will distinguished from the speculations of the understanding. Such are the previous general discriminations necessary for a right arrangement, which is the introduction of the full and perfect order in the regenerate mind: For behold, when the needful distinctions have been made, by a right reception of the grace and truth of the MOST HIGH, then the arrangements of order follow, and every principle takes it's proper place. Then the love of GOD and heaven is exalted to the supreme seat of government, and every affection, every thought, every appetite, and every passion, has it's subordinate place and subordinate ruler under the Supreme. For it deserves well to be

be noted, that in the regenerate life, or the life of heavenly order, no principle is totally annihilated, for order never annihilates, but only arranges. The passions, therefore, themselves are not absolutely destroyed; they are only subdued and kept in chains, that they cannot do mischief, and in that state they are compelled to administer to the general order, whilst every rational natural affection and delight, together with every corporeal appetite, that has been taught to submit itself to the supreme government of the **LOVE OF GOD**, adds to the extension and to the perfection of this well-arranged mind.

Behold here then the living *reality* of that striking *type* and *figure* exhibited in the camp of Israel, when Jethro gave the counsel of divine arrangement and order to his son-in-law Moses!

Behold in this regenerate mind, the *rulers of thousands, the rulers of hundreds, the rulers of fifties, and the rulers of tens*, all in subordination to their heaven-directed head! Behold, I say, the perfect, the consummate beauty of that order which descends from heaven, and which entering into humble and obedient minds on earth, forms them in it's own likeness, after the similitude of it's own kingdom, where all violence and outrage is restrained, where all is love, and harmony, and joy; where every principle knows it's proper place, because it knows that the highest and happiest place of all others is the  
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the most absolute submission to the Supreme Ruler, whose name is **JESUS CHRIST**.

To conclude—Do we wish to attain unto the blessed order here described, and to come out of all the workings and confusions of the disorder? Do we wish thus to attain unto salvation and eternal life, which are only other names for the life and subordinations of order; and to avoid destruction and eternal death, which are only other names for the misrule and anarchy of disorder? Let us then remember the counsel of Jethro to his son-in-law Moses, and in obedience to that counsel, let us make the proper distinctions and discriminations in the principles of our own minds. But whereas we cannot do this, only so far as we admit and exalt a higher principle, that is **JESUS CHRIST** and His life, into our hearts and lives, because he only is the **GOD** of order, and no order can come except from Him alone, therefore this must be our further rule and law of conduct, to have continual respect unto that **GREAT** and **HOLY LORD** and **GOVERNOR**. And whereas we cannot have such respect unto **JESUS CHRIST**, only so far as we enter into the ways of true repentance, through serious self-examination, and a diligent study and practice of the **Word of GOD**, which contains the laws of heavenly order, therefore this also is to be considered as absolutely necessary to our attaining that blessed end.

Let us then lose no time in entering upon this happy work, by putting away our sins, and looking for that purpose to the GOD of heaven: And then the GOD of heaven, whose name is JESUS CHRIST, will assuredly be with us, and will inspire us with the love of Himself and with His own wisdom; and as we cherish this divine love and divine wisdom in our hearts, it will by degrees put down every other love and every other wisdom in it's proper place, till at length it hath restored in us it's own blessed order, and fulfilled it's own blessed promise, where it is written, "*Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, TO ORDER IT, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever.*"\*  
**AMEN.**

\* Isaiah ix. 7.

## SERMON XVI.

The Israelites at Mount Sinai, or the Truth  
and Sanctity of the Decalogue.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N attending the children of Israel in their memorable journey through the wilderness, as we have already done in several former discourses, we find them at length, after the space of three months, entering into the wilderness of Sinai, for thus it is written, "*In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai; for they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount.*"\*

I need not perhaps inform you, that this mount, before which we now find the children of Israel encamped,

\* Exod. xix. 1, 2.

encamped, was that *holy mount of Sinai*, from which JEHOVAH, on this memorable occasion, delivered the law of the *Ten Commandments*. Nothing can be conceived more worthy of human attention, than the several circumstances which distinguished this great event. The occurrences heretofore noted respecting this heaven-directed people, from their first departure out of Egypt, till their arrival at their present encampment, are indeed both extraordinary and edifying; but the present occurrence surpasses them all, both in wonder and instruction, teaching us by its high authority this important lesson, that the more we follow the counsels of GOD, the more we shall see of His marvellous works; and that every *present* manifestation of His power and glory, (if we are obedient to it) is sure to be succeeded by a *future* one still more splendid and more convincing.

Let us then attend closely to the transactions now presented to our view, that we may catch the sublime wisdom which they were designed to impart to us. Let us, for a moment, take our places also with the children of Israel before the *sacred mount*, and keep our eyes stedfastly fixed on every particular of what passes there. Behold, first of all, we see the venerable leader *Moses going up unto GOD*, for so we read, and that "*The LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians,*

*tians,*

tians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto ME above all people; for all the earth is Mine; and ye shall be unto ME a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."\*

What can be conceived more affectionate and more attractive than the tenor of these holy words! What more demonstrative of the eternal mercies of JEHOVAH, or more calculated to engage the hearts of His people! Accordingly we find, when Moses delivered the divine message to the children of Israel, it had it's proper effect, for "*all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.*"†

But behold, the LORD speaks again unto Moses, and says, "*Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever.*"‡ And having given this notice of His intention to come unto Moses, He gives directions also concerning the preparation necessary for the people on the awful occasion; as first, That *they should be sanctified for two days; secondly, that they should wash their clothes; thirdly, that they should be ready against the third day, for on the third day the LORD would come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai; fourthly, that bounds should be set unto the people round about, lest they should go up into the mount, and touch the border*

\* Exod. xix. 3, 4, 5, 6.

† Exod. xix. 8.

‡ Exod. xix. 9.

*border of it : for whosoever touched the border of it was to be put to death.\**

After these previous solemn preparations of two days' continuance, behold, on the *third day, in the morning*, the presence of JEHOVAH is announced by *thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled : And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire ; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly : And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and GOD answered him by a voice : And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount ; and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up,†* and received that law of the Ten Commandments which remains with us unto this day.

It is impossible for the serious mind to read the account of these solemn and tremendous circumstances without being struck with the two following reflections :

- 1st. That the revelation which they announce must needs be *most true* ;
- 2dly. That it must needs also be *most holy*.

And first, the revelation here announced must needs be *most true*, for this plain reason, because being made in the presence of so many people who were

\* Exod. xix. 10, 11, 12. † Exod. xix. 16, 18, 19, 20,



were joint witnesses of it, and being confirmed by so many remarkable signs applied to the senses of those people, it is impossible to suppose, that there could be any thing like fraud or imposition on the occasion. It is *most true*, therefore, that GOD really spake to Moses, and that the commandments of the decalogue, commonly called the Ten Commandments, which were delivered on this occasion, and which we find written in the 20th chapter of the book of Exodus, are *the real Words of GOD*, and not the words of any man. Had we, indeed, nothing but the testimony of a single person, or of two or three persons, in support of such revelation, it might possibly in some degree appear questionable, but on this occasion we have the united testimony of upwards of six hundred thousand people, to confirm our belief, whose eyes and ears both were convinced by unequivocal signs from heaven announcing the divine presence: For we read, that they not only saw *lightnings* and a *thick cloud* upon Mount Sinai, but they also heard *thunders, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud*.

But secondly—This revelation must needs also be *most holy*, as well as most true. Let me bespeak your most awakened attention to this very interesting consideration. The revelation made from Mount Sinai must needs be *most holy*, as coming immediately from the GREAT and HOLY GOD, for whatsoever GOD speaks must of necessity partake of His divine *holiness*. The commandments of the decalogue,

decatalogue, therefore, commonly called the Ten Commandments, which GOD spake by His servant Moses on the above awful occasion, must needs be full of a divine sanctity, and adapted to convey that sanctity to man. They are not, therefore, to be regarded as mere human laws or as the laws merely of moral or civil life, although they contain the wisest regulations both of moral and social order; but, they are to be regarded in a far higher view, viz. as divine laws, as the laws of heavenly life and association, intended to fit and qualify man to be an inheritor of an heavenly kingdom, by forming him after a heavenly order. Whosoever, therefore, rejects or slights these heaven-born laws, casts himself by necessary consequence out of the order and bliss of heaven, into the disorder and misery of the opposite kingdom. But whosoever is wise, from a thorough conviction of the sanctity and divine original of these laws of the MOST HIGH, to keep and do them, he proportionably re-enters into the life and order of the heavenly world; he becomes thus a citizen of the New Jerusalem; he is formed according to the highest wisdom of the angelic societies, and having conjunction thereby with the everlasting GOD, he ascends into the regions of celestial love, protection and peace.

Behold here then the inexpressible sanctity of the law of the Ten Commandments! And yet how few amongst us, alas! are rightly affected by it! How few keep the law, under a due sense of its divine original

original and divine intention! The case is, we read these commandments when we are children, without reflecting aright on their divine source, and when we become men, capable of such reflection, and called to the profitable exercise of it, we still continue to act like children, and read the law, but forget from whence it came, and what are its heavenly purposes and effects. The unhappy but necessary consequence is, we deprive the law of all its divine life and sanctity with respect to ourselves, by separating it in ourselves from its divine original. Thus what was intended to re-conjoin us with GOD and with the life and order of His eternal kingdom, as every law from GOD must be intended, is rendered incompetent to that blessed purpose, because it is impossible we can be re-conjoined with GOD and His kingdom by the observance of any law, only so far as we are persuaded that it is from GOD, and obey it under the influence of such a persuasion,

As for example—in the laws under consideration, GOD expressly says, “*Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*” Now, if we regard these laws merely as laws of civil society here on earth, and not as laws of heavenly order and society at the same time; if we are not well aware in our minds of the divine sanctity of these heavenly laws, from a consideration of their divine original, and of their divine intention also to form us after a heavenly order,

image and life; it will be impossible they should have that blessed effect of re-conjoining us with GOD, and making us partakers of His holy life and kingdom, which they were intended to have, even though we observe and keep them according to the strictest sense of the letter. For suppose that we *do no murder*, that we *do not commit adultery*, that we *do not steal*, that we *do not bear false witness*, and yet that we never regard GOD in abstaining from such evils, but only regard our own reputation, or the laws of civil society, how plain is it to see, that our observance of the commandments of GOD doth not conduct us a step nearer towards GOD, nor bring GOD nearer towards us, as it was intended to do, because, though we keep the commandment in the *letter*, we do not keep it in the *spirit*; though we abstain from the evils forbidden, we do not abstain from them under the influence of the sanctifying principle by which they were forbidden. The consequence is, we keep, indeed, the law in it's *external* form, but we do not keep it in it's *internal* power and sanctity; and thus separating that power and sanctity from the law, we separate GOD from it, and of course cannot have the slightest conjunction with GOD, His life, His order, or His kingdom, in keeping the law.

Would we then reverse this sad case, and find all the unspeakable blessings and benefits intended to be derived to us from the commandments of GOD? Would we experience the proper, the divine efficacy  
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of the holy law, in delivering us from our corruptions, in re-conjoining us with GOD, and in re-creating us in His blessed image and likeness? Let us then go to Mount Sinai, and mark the divine original of the consecrated tables. Let us open our eyes to behold the *lightnings*, the *cloud*, and the *smoke*; and our ears to hear the *thunders* and the *voice of the trumpet* on the holy mountain. Let us draw near with *sanctified hearts*, and let us also *wash our clothes*, that we may be ready *on the third day*, to see JEHOVAH descend, and to hear Him speak: But let us not stop here— When we are thus convinced in our own minds of the divine original and sanctity of the holy law of the Ten Commandments, let us then go to *another mountain*, of which Mount Sinai in the wilderness with its *lightnings*, its *cloud*, its *smoke*, its *thunders*, and the *voice of its trumpet*, was but a *figure*. Let us go, I say, to *another mountain*, viz. the mountain of which the apostle speaks, where he says, “*Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the First-born which are written in heaven, and to GOD the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to JESUS the Mediator of the new covenant.*”\* Let us approach,

\* Heb. xij. 18 to 25.

approach, I say, with penitent and believing hearts unto this holy mountain, and listen attentively unto the voice of Him who eternally reigns there, even the voice of JESUS CHRIST, the manifested JEHOVAH, continually saying, "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*"\*

Then shall we be enabled to discern, that the laws of the Ten Commandments are full of the life, and spirit, and sanctity of JESUS CHRIST, because they proceed from Him, as from their true and proper source. And keeping them under this holy persuasion, we shall quickly be made sensible in our own minds of their divine efficacy to remove our corruptions and to re-conjoin us with that great and glorious GOD, His life and kingdom. For then, as we cease to *commit murder*, by ceasing to hate and despise one another, JESUS CHRIST, to whom we look for grace to do so, will not fail to inspire us with all heavenly love and charity one towards another: As we cease to *commit adultery*, by ceasing to cherish unclean and impure thoughts, JESUS CHRIST again will not fail to sanctify us with His own spirit of inward purity and chastity: As we cease to *steal*, by rejecting every desire of dishonest gain, JESUS CHRIST will implant in us the spirit of honesty and uprightness from Himself: As we cease to *bear false witness*, by renouncing whatsoever is contrary to the truth, JESUS CHRIST will enable us to delight in loving and speaking the truth

\* Matt. xix. 17.

truth out of purified hearts. Thus we shall find that the law and the Gospel are not at variance with each other, as some people suppose, neither is evangelical virtue at variance with moral rectitude; so far from it, the Gospel is the law unveiled and spiritualized, and the laws of pure morality are laws of divine extraction, and connected with the religion of JESUS CHRIST, having a blessed tendency in their observance to bring JESUS CHRIST, and His life and kingdom, nearer to us; and at the same time, to draw us nearer to the life and kingdom of JESUS CHRIST.

To conclude—We read of a young man in the Gospel, who came to JESUS, inquiring what he should do to inherit eternal life? JESUS said unto him, “*Thou knowest the Commandments.*” He answered and said, *All these have I observed from my youth. Then JESUS beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow ME.”\**

Some have been led, from this account, to suppose, that it is not enough for man’s salvation to keep the law of the Ten Commandments, but that something further is required to be done for the accomplishment of that blessed end. This, however, by no means appears to be a just conclusion, from the history of the above young man. The case rather seems to be this, that the young man had deceived himself by supposing that he had kept the Commandments,

\* Mark x. 18 to 22.

mandments, when in reality he had not kept them ; at least he had kept them only in the *letter*, but not in the *spirit*. JESUS CHRIST therefore tells him, that he was still *lacking* ; and to teach him, that he was lacking in the *spirit* of the Commandment, He adds, “ *Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor ; and come, take up the cross, and follow ME.*”

Let us learn from these words of JESUS CHRIST that we cannot keep the Commandments aright, and fully, merely by the regulation of our *external* actions, but by the regulation of our *internal* affections and thoughts ; that is to say, by renouncing our own selfish wills, in the humble acknowledgement that all we possess is of GOD, and from GOD, signified by “ *selling whatsoever we have, and giving to the poor ;*” and by entering into the warfare against our corruptions, signified further by “ *taking up our cross ;*” and lastly, by looking to JESUS CHRIST, the manifested JEHOVAH, as our only GOD and SAVIOUR, for continual grace to enable us to conquer in that warfare, signified by “ *following HIM.*”

Whensoever we are wise thus to keep the Commandments in the *spirit*, as well as in the *letter*, then shall we find them indeed to be the laws of eternal life and salvation, because then, in keeping them, we shall experience their divine efficacy to remove our corruptions, to re-conjoin us with GOD, and thus to fulfil the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, “ *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.*”  
AMEN.



## SERMON XVII.

On the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we left Moses and the children of Israel at Mount-Sinai, receiving from GOD the laws of the Ten Commandments. These laws, it was shown, are not only moral and civil laws, but also spiritual laws; in other words, they are not only laws of order respecting the well-being of societies here on earth, but they are also laws of order tending to communicate spiritual and eternal life, and thus to introduce the devout observer into heavenly societies, by forming him after an heavenly image and spirit.

But we have not yet done with the divine instruction received from this holy mountain; for Moses, we read, was again called up unto GOD, and *was*

*in the mount forty days and forty nights,\** during which time he received a command from the MOST HIGH to build Him a *tabernacle*. A most minute and particular description is then given of this sacred edifice, through ~~seven~~ successive chapters, containing an account of it's general construction, of it's several parts, of the persons who were to minister in it, of it's services, it's sacrifices, and it's furniture, all described most distinctly, and according to the most exact and orderly arrangement.

It is not my intention to enter upon the explication of all these *particulars* of the holy building in the wilderness, though it might easily be shown, that all and each of them involve some spiritual and highly instructive signification, being, as the apostle expresseth it, *patterns of things in the heavens,*† and of consequence designed to *figure* those eternal realities, and thereby to make them known and manifest unto man.

It is much to be lamented, that the state of men's minds in general, at this day, is but little adapted to such pure and spiritual interpretation of the WORD OF GOD. Too many amongst us, it is to be feared, having through our corruptions lost sight of the divinity and proper sanctity of the sacred oracles, and of the spirituality of their contents, confound them with the writings of men, and are indisposed to believe that they involve in them any deeper meaning than what appears in the letter. Whilst this gross persuasion

\* Exod. xxiv. 18    † Heb. ix. 23.

persuasion darkens the intellectual sight, it is impossible we can discern the bright interior verities treasured up in the **WORD OF GOD**; yea, though they should be declared to us a thousand and a thousand times by the tongue of an angel, yet, under the delusive influence of such a persuasion, we should either reject them as visionary, or despise them as unimportant.

But whence comes it to pass, that we can thus quietly submit to have our eyes put out, and to be rendered totally blind to the knowledge of those things, which, above all others, do so essentially concern our everlasting welfare? Whence comes it to pass, that we can allow to the words of man the *meaning* of a man, but yet refuse to allow to the words of **GOD** the *meaning* of a God? In the case under consideration, **GOD** thus expresses Himself to Moses, "*Let them make ME a sanctuary that I may dwell among them; according to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*"\* **GOD** then Himself, it is plain from these words, pointed out to Moses *the pattern* of the tabernacle, together with *the pattern* of all its parts, and ordinances, and instruments. These things, therefore, were all of them first in the *divine idea*, and sprung from that *idea*, before they were constructed in their material forms. But can we think so grossly as to suppose, that the ideas of the **GREAT and HOLY GOD**

\* Exod. xxv. 8.

**GOD** are *material*? Can we be so blinded as to imagine that the *patterns*, which the **ALMIGHTY** conceived in His Divine Mind, were *patterns* merely of *wood*, and *stone*, and *iron*, and *brass*? **GOD**, we know from His own authority, is a *spirit*,\* and therefore all His *thoughts*, and all His *words*, and all His *patterns*, must needs be *spiritual* also, and intended to suggest spiritual ideas in the minds of men, howsoever they may be expressed in material *images* and *figures*.

Let us give this point a little further attention, not only on account of it's general importance towards opening to our view the true nature and sacred contents of the **WORD OF GOD**, but also on account of it's particular importance to unfold to our apprehension the high use and design of the consecrated tabernacle under consideration.

We cannot open a page of the Holy Volume of the Divine Records, without being struck forcibly with the reflection, that *spiritual ideas* are continually expressed by *material images*, which *material images* contain, and were intended to convey those *spiritual ideas*. This is a language peculiar to **GOD** Himself, and what distinguishes His Divine **WORD** from all human words whatsoever. When **GOD** speaks, He uses indeed *human expressions*, such as are the names of *natural* and *material* objects, but then he always uses them in reference to those *spiritual* and *interior ideas*, which, by the order of crea-

tion,

\* John iv. 24.

tion, those objects are calculated to suggest. Thus His Word is at once intelligible to man, and replete with heavenly and divine wisdom and life, which it could not be, unless it was thus spoken and written. For if GOD, in speaking, did not use human expressions of *natural* and *material objects*, man could never understand His speech; and if those expressions again did not involve divine ideas and a divine meaning, they would not be the words of GOD, but of man.

To illustrate this by a few instances. JESUS CHRIST, we know, calls Himself *a door*, "*I am the door, (says he,) of the sheepfold.*"\* The term *door*, it is plain, in this passage, is a human expression, taken from a *natural* and *material* object, and thus calculated to affect man's understanding. But who cannot see that this *material* term involves in it a *spiritual* and *divine idea*, and that if it did not involve in it such an idea, it would not be the WORD of GOD, neither could it communicate any *spirit* or *life*, whatsoever, from GOD to man? Whereas, when it is once seen that this term *door*, as applied by JESUS CHRIST, contains in it a *divine meaning*, and especially when it is seen what that *divine meaning* is, then man's mind may be affected by it, and becoming receptive of the *life* and *spirit* which it's Divine Author intended it to convey, may attain the blessedness of continual conjunction

\* John x. 9.

junction with JESUS CHRIST through His holy and divine Word.

So again—JESUS CHRIST, we know, calls Himself *a vine*,\* *a shepherd*,† *a way*,‡ *the light of the world*,§ and speaking of the truth of His Holy Word, He calls it *water*, which he declares shall flow out of *the belly of him that believeth*.|| But who cannot see here again, that all these *natural images*, such as a *vine*, a *shepherd*, a *way*, *light*, and *water*, would be mere lifeless unmeaning expressions, unless they involved in them things *spiritual* and *divine*? Whereas, when it is acknowledged that they are the sacred continents of the thoughts and intentions of the GOD who applies them; when it is considered, that they were designed to convey those divine thoughts and intentions to us sinful men here on earth; we then bow down in humiliation before the Divine Speaker; we receive with devout reverence His consecrated speech; we feed upon the heavenly and eternal wisdom with which it is replete, and thus being filled with heavenly and eternal life, we are taught by joyful experience, that “*man doeth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD.*”\*\*

I shall beg leave to mention one other example of this mode of GOD’s speaking, by reason of it’s immediate reference to the subject under consideration.

it

\* John xv. 1, 5  
chap. ix. 5.

† John x. 11, 14.  
|| John vii. 37, 38.

‡ John xiv. 6.

§ John viii. 12.

\*\* Deut. viii. 3. Matt. iv. 4.

It is written in the book of the Revelations, chap. xxi. 3, speaking of the descent of the New Jerusalem, "*I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of GOD is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and GOD Himself shall be with them their GOD.*"\*

What is here called "*the tabernacle of GOD,*" is in the foregoing verse called "*the Holy City, New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband,*" for it is there written, "*I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*"†

But what eye now can be so blinded as not to see plainly, that divine and spiritual things are here intended to be expressed and conveyed by the material and natural images of a *tabernacle*, a *city*, and a *bride*? For how can a *city* be supposed to *come down from GOD out of heaven*, if by a city nothing else be meant but buildings of *stone*, of *brick*, and of *wood*? Besides in what possible or probable sense can such a city be compared to a *bride adorned for her husband*?

Here then, if our eyes be opened to any degree of spiritual understanding, we shall be enabled to discern clearly, what was intended to be *figured* to us both by *the tabernacle* in the wilderness of old, and by *the tabernacle* in the Revelations of St. John, of which it is written, "*behold the tabernacle of GOD is with men.*" We shall be enabled, I say, to discern

\* Rev. xxi. 3. † Rev. xxi. 2.

cern that both these tabernacles are instructive *representative figures* of those spiritual and eternal principles of righteousness and truth derived from the Word of the living GOD, in which alone GOD *dwells with man*, and by which alone man is conjoined with GOD, and rendered a subject of the divine blessing. It is therefore said of the *latter tabernacle*, “*Behold the tabernacle of GOD is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and GOD Himself shall be with them, their GOD; and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*” But how now can GOD *dwell with man*, except in His own Word, as JESUS CHRIST testifies, “*If a man love ME, he will keep My words, and My FATHER will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him?\**” And how can GOD *wipe away all tears from men’s eyes*, except by delivering them from their corruptions, in which alone all tears and sorrow originate, through the purifying power of His holy Word, as JESUS CHRIST saith in another place, “*Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.*”† Unless man, therefore, hath *the words* of JESUS CHRIST abiding in his heart, there is nothing in him, in which JESUS CHRIST can possibly dwell; neither is there any medium of *wiping away his tears*: For JESUS CHRIST, it is plain, can never dwell in the filth of sin and corruption; neither can He *wipe away the tears*

\* John xiv. 23. † John xv. 3.



tears of those who live in impenitence; but He dwells only with the humble and the penitent who keep His Word, and wipes away the tears of those alone, who through His Word become clean from sin and folly.

Besides, GOD declares of His *holy city or tabernacle*, that it was *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*.

The comparison is surely most remarkable, and cannot admit of any possible application but to the conjunction between JESUS CHRIST and His Church. JESUS CHRIST, therefore, by virtue of such conjunction, is repeatedly called in the Sacred Scriptures the *bridegroom\** and the *husband*;† as His Church also is called *the bride and the wife*. But what, shall we say, is this *Church*, this *bride*, this *wife* of JESUS CHRIST, but those living principles of heavenly faith and love and obedience; derived from the Word of GOD, and operative in the hearts of men, in which JESUS CHRIST delights to make His eternal abode; and by which He enjoys perpetual conjunction with man, and man with Him? Such is *the tabernacle of GOD*; such, therefore, are the heavenly principles which we are called upon to admit and cherish, in our hearts and lives, if we ever hope to attain the high honour of becoming such holy tabernacles; of being *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*.

To

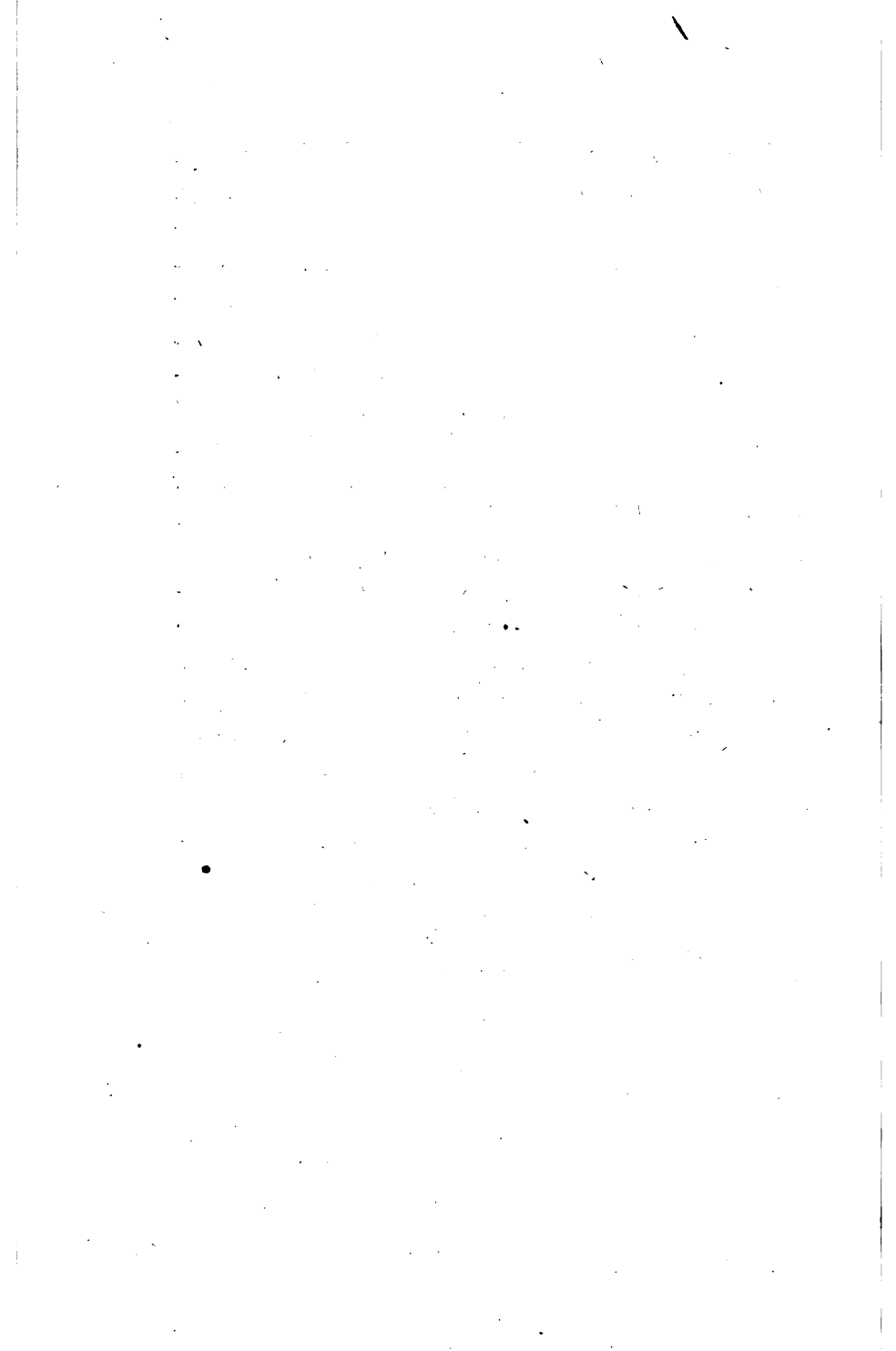
\* Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29. † Isaiah liv. 5.

To conclude—Whosoever from henceforth we read or think of the tabernacle in the wilderness, let it lead us to reflect on that more important, because *spiritual tabernacle*, which GOD commands us all to build for Him in our own hearts, and in which He is ever disposed to dwell, with all the blessings of His Divine presence and kingdom: Let us imagine that we hear the ALMIGHTY speak continually to us, as He spake by His servant Moses to the children of Israel, when He said, “*Let them make ME a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them, according to all that I show thee.*” Let us never lose sight of this *heavenly sanctuary*, of the blessings which it involves, of the wisdom and holiness required for its construction. The *blessings which it involves* are such surely as must command the attention and highest regard of every reasonable being. For let us reflect for a moment, what it is to become *the tabernacle of GOD*. Is it not to be delivered from sin, from misery, from folly, and from death? Is it not to attain righteousness, peace and wisdom, and life? Can any mischief befall those, who are happy enough to have GOD dwelling in them, or can such happy ones be wanting in any joy or consolation? Is not this, in short, the highest privilege of our natures, the grand end of our religion, the true and only perfection of our bliss, to become the pure, the living tabernacles of the MOST HIGH GOD? Can we conceive, I say, any higher happiness or honour than this?

Bnt

But we must not stop here, in reflecting only on *the blessings* which abound in the *heavenly sanctuary*. If we would secure those blessings to ourselves, we must consider also *the wisdom and the holiness requisite for the construction of the sacred tabernacle* in ourselves. And here a moment's serious thought will teach us, that this requisite wisdom and holiness may be summed up in these two evangelical words, *repentance* and *faith* in the incarnate GOD; for where repentance and faith are, and operate, there GOD Himself with His Divine Word is and operates; there He builds His eternal tabernacle; there He opens His own heaven; there He communicates all the blessings of His kingdom, agreeable to His own testimony, where it is written in the prophet, "*Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*"\*  
**AMEN.**

\* Isaiah lvii. 15.



## SERMON XVIII.

### On the Offerings of the Tabernacle.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N attending the people of GOD in their memorable journey out of Egypt to the promised land, we have already considered, in several former discourses on the words of my text, some of the very extraordinary and edifying circumstances which befel them, together with the spiritual instruction involved in each of those circumstances. The last subject to which our attention was called, was concerning the *tabernacle* or *sanctuary*, which Moses was commanded of GOD to build in the wilderness, and it was shown, that this also was a *type* or *figure* of that *spiritual tabernacle*, that eternal *sanctuary*, which every man is required to build for GOD in his own mind or spirit, and in which alone GOD dwells with man, and man with GOD. But  
how

how few amongst us, alas! give to this subject the attention which it deserves! How few consider the necessity of such a spiritual tabernacle, and that without it there can be no salvation! We feel an interest in providing earthly habitations for *ourselves*, but whence is it that we feel no such interest in providing a heavenly habitation for our GOD? We are concerned, and concerned justly, about the tabernacle of our *bodies*, but whence is it that we are not at least equally concerned about "*that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,*" in which our souls are to take up their everlasting abodes?

Permit me then to press this subject upon your further attention with all that earnestness which its infinite importance demands; and for this purpose suffer me to call to your recollection some further particulars presented to our view in the Sacred Records relative to the construction of this heavenly abode.

The first intimation given to Moses by the ALMIGHTY respecting the building of the tabernacle, was in these words:

*"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering."\**

There are two lessons of the most interesting instruction contained in these words, absolutely necessary for every one to attend to and practise, who  
aspires

\* Exod. xxv. 2.

aspires after the high honour and happiness of building in himself the tabernacle of GOD.

The *first* is, that an *offering must be brought unto GOD*; as expressed in these words of JEHOVAH to Moses, "*Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an OFFERING.*"

The *second* is, that this offering must be a *free-will-offering*, as expressed in these words, "*Of every man that giveth it WILLINGLY WITH HIS HEART, ye shall take my offering.*"

Let me bespeak your attention to both these particulars; and *first* to this consideration, that to build the tabernacle of GOD, it is necessary that *an offering be brought unto GOD.*

The *offerings brought unto GOD* on this occasion by the children of Israel were of various kinds, for it is written, that "*They came both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats'-hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. And the rulers brought onyx-stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breast-plate; and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense.*"\*

Thus did the children of Israel contribute all that they

they esteemed most valuable, towards the building of that sacred tabernacle, in which JEHOVAH was to be present and dwell amongst them.

We are not, however, to suppose that any such *offerings* as these are required from us at this day, towards building in ourselves the spiritual tabernacle or sanctuary of our GOD. For if we had the wealth of the whole world, all it's gold, and silver, and precious stones, and were to offer up the whole unto GOD, it would be of no avail whatsoever, towards bringing GOD nearer to us, or inclining Him to come and make His blessed abode in us.

Nevertheless, there are *offerings* which we also are called to *offer*, and which, if we would offer them *willingly*, would assuredly be attended with this blessed effect, to fix in us the everlasting tabernacle of the MOST HIGH, so that as it is written, *GOD might dwell in us, and we in GOD.\**

What these *offerings* are we are plainly told in these words of GOD to the Psalmist, "*Thinkest thou that I will eat bulls' flesh, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto GOD THANKSGIVING, and PAY THY VOWS unto the MOST HIGH:*"† And again, *Whoso OFFERETH PRAISE, glorifieth ME, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of GOD.*‡

Behold here then the *offerings* necessary to be *offered* on our part, in order to prepare ourselves to become the pure and blessed tabernacles of GOD!

Behold,

\* 1 John iii. 23. † Psalm l. 13, 14. ‡ Psalm l. 23.



Behold, I say, the *spiritual* things intended to be *figured* to us by the offerings of the children of Israel of old, by their *gold*, their *silver*, their *precious stones* and *apparel* !

All is comprehended in this one word THANKSGIVING: But what a most comprehensive word is this! How many things doth it involve! what a variety of *offerings* doth it require! Who can pretend to say that he has ever *fully* performed this duty of *offering thanksgiving* unto GOD?—Let us examine how far this is the case.

To be *thankful to GOD*, manifestly implies, that we acknowledge *gratefully*, that whatsoever we possess, we have received and do receive from GOD: It implies, therefore, that we give it back again to GOD under an acknowledgement, confessing with thankfulness, and in humiliation, that all our faculties both of mind and body are GOD's, and are our's only as *lent to us*. How strange is it to suppose that we can be *thankful to GOD* in any other way than this, or that we can *offer Him our praises* by any other method, than by thus humbly acknowledging Him as the fountain of our lives and of all our enjoyments; of our daily powers of thinking and of acting; of our daily blessings, protections and providences which we experience; but especially of those spiritual powers of our immortal souls, whereby we can elevate ourselves above the perishable things of this world, attach ourselves

to the everlasting GOD and His kingdom, and live for ever.

Such, then, beloved, are the *offerings* which we are called upon to offer, if we ever hope to attain the high blessedness of becoming the tabernacles of GOD. We are not required to give our gold or our silver, our precious stones or our apparel, though these also are the gifts of GOD, and are therefore of right His property: But we are required to make an absolute surrender of ourselves, that is to say, of all our faculties, and of all our capacities unto GOD, under the acknowledgment that they are His more than ours. For how plain is it to see, that GOD cannot dwell where He is not acknowledged, and that He cannot be properly acknowledged but by that humiliation and thanksgiving which confess all things to be His, because they are His gifts? A proud and impenitent heart, therefore, can never become the abode of GOD, because a proud and impenitent heart, by insisting that it's life and all it's faculties are it's own, and not GOD's, separates itself from GOD, and of course separates GOD from itself. Whereas, with the humble and the penitent, GOD continually dwells, and builds the eternal tabernacle of His presence and salvation, because the humble and the penitent are ever disposed to acknowledge in humility and thankfulness, that their life and all their faculties are from GOD. It is for this reason that religion, the great end of which is to make us all  
the

pure and happy abodes of JESUS CHRIST and His spirit, lays so much stress perpetually on the virtues of humiliation and repentance, because these are the leading, the fundamental virtues necessary to establish the tabernacle of the MOST HIGH; to bring GOD down into the human soul, and to fulfil those blessed words of JESUS CHRIST, where He says, "*Abide in ME, and I in you.*"\*

But secondly—It is not only necessary that *an offering be brought unto GOD*, with a view to the building of His tabernacle, but it is necessary also that this offering be *a free-will-offering*, as it is written, "*Of every man that giveth it WILLINGLY WITH HIS HEART, ye shall take my offering.*"

Let us attend also to this consideration. Religion; reason, and experience, all unite in announcing, that GOD has bestowed upon every one of us the astonishing faculty of FREE-WILL, though in general, alas! it is too little considered what this faculty is, and what it involves.

Yet without this faculty we should not be men, neither should we have the power either of thinking about, or of pleasing GOD; consequently we should not have the power of being conjoined with GOD, of becoming His tabernacles, and of receiving His life.

The *freedom of our wills* then is the ground of our immortality, of our salvation, and of our highest bliss, because it is the ground of GOD's sanctuary

\* John xv. 4.

tuary within us: GOD Himself ever dwells with us in this astonishing faculty which he has given us, and renders it operative. It is by virtue of this faculty alone that we can choose GOD as our highest GOOD, and attach ourselves eternally to Him. It is by virtue of this faculty that we can renounce our corruptions, and ceasing to delight in sin, and vanity, and folly, can be admitted to, and enjoy the consolations of the eternal wisdom and holiness. It is by virtue of this faculty that we are free to choose whatsoever we please, either life or death, either GOD and His kingdom, or their opposites: We can move ourselves in any direction we think proper, either upwards or downwards, either towards heaven or towards hell, either towards the everlasting light, or the everlasting darkness. In short, this faculty of our free-will is every thing to us, and our all depends upon it's determinations.

Here then we may see a reason why, in building in ourselves the holy tabernacle of GOD, it is necessary, not only that we *bring Him an offering*, but that this offering also be a *free-will-offering*.

The reason, I say, is plain—for the holy and blessed GOD cannot dwell in any thing like *compulsion*, but only in the most *perfect freedom*. All the *offerings* therefore which we bring unto GOD, and which are *forced*, and not *free*, so far from being acceptable to Him, and inviting Him nearer to us, rather excite His disgust, and drive Him from us. Our best prayers, and our highest praises, are no farther pleasing in His sight, than as they proceed

ceed from our *free-will*. For GOD ever wills our highest happiness, but then He knows that there can be no happiness but in *freedom*, and that in all *compulsion* there is misery. JESUS CHRIST therefore, who came to deliver us from the slavery of sin, and thus from eternal misery, came to restore us also to the most *perfect freedom*; therefore He says, “*If the SON shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*”\*

Would we then build in ourselves the sacred tabernacle of GOD, and aspire after this blessed, this only true end of all religion, to have GOD *dwelling in us*? Let us then begin with *bringing our offerings* unto GOD, even the *offerings* of whatsoever we have received from Him, of all our faculties whether natural or spiritual, whether of body or of mind. Let us be careful to reserve nothing from Him, under the full conviction that whatsoever is kept back from GOD, is separated from life, from sanctity, and from blessedness; but that whatsoever is restored to GOD, is restored to conjunction with all that is alive, that is holy and happy. Let us remember, however, that to render these our offerings truly effectual, it is necessary that they be *free*, and they cannot be *free*, any further than as they proceed from *freedom*, not from *compulsion*?

Would we know of a certainty when our offerings are from *freedom*, and when from *compulsion*, we have only to examine whether they are attended with *delight* to us, or with *no delight*, for in all freedom there is *delight*, whereas in compulsion there

is

is *no delight*. But since we cannot find *delight* in bringing our offerings unto GOD, only so far as we are delivered from the *opposite delight* of reserving them to ourselves, by living to ourselves and the world more than to GOD, therefore, if we ever hope to attain this highest honour of becoming the tabernacles of the MOST HIGH, we must beg earnestly of JESUS CHRIST, who alone can make us *free*, that giving us the spirit of true repentance and conversion to Himself, He would rescue us from the *infernal delight* of living at any time to ourselves and the world, more than to Him,

Behold here the blessed, the infallible method of establishing in ourselves the sacred, the eternal sanctuary, in which the HIGH AND HOLY ONE, *Who inhabiteth eternity*, may love to dwell!

He who, from freedom, *finds his chief delight* in the love, the service, and the acknowledgment of GOD, and his chief misery in the want of such love, such service, and such acknowledgment, is already become such a blessed sanctuary. GOD dwells in him, and he in GOD. His heart is the happy, the pure abode of the eternal wisdom of the supreme good, of the everlasting life and peace. No sin, no misery, no darkness can approach and enter the sacred dwelling of such a humble, penitent, and free mind, but in it is fulfilled the declaration of JESUS CHRIST, where He saith, "*These words have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*"\* AMEN,

## SERMON XIX.

On the several Parts of the Tabernacle, with their Contents, viz. the Ark, the Mercy-Seat, the Cherubim, the Shew-Bread, the Candlestick, the Brazen-Altar, and the Laver.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our two last discourses on these words we were led to the consideration of the *tabernacle* in the wilderness, which Moses was commanded to build unto GOD; and it was shown how this tabernacle was significative and representative of that *spiritual tabernacle* or abode, which we are all of us called to build unto GOD in our own hearts and lives.

There are some further edifying particulars respecting the construction and contents of this sacred tabernacle in the wilderness, to which I should be

happy

happy to call your present attention, because of their infinite importance.

These particulars will refer themselves to the three following heads :

1st. To the *inmost* part of this tabernacle, and it's contents ;

2dly. To the *interior* part, and it's contents ; And

3dly. To the *outermost* part, and it's contents.

First—Then let us consider the *inmost* part of this tabernacle, and it's contents.

This inmost part, we read, was separated from the other parts by a *veil*, and contained in it the *ark*, in which was deposited the *testimony*, or the law of the *Ten Commandments*, and over the ark was the *mercy-seat* covered with the *golden cherubims* ; and of this inmost part it was said of GOD to Moses, “ *There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.*”\*

Behold here the most exact *figures* and *representative types* of the inmost principles of the regenerate mind of man, when he is happy enough by regeneration to become the consecrated tabernacle or temple of his GOD !

Whilst, indeed, he continues in his unconverted and unregenerate state, his heart is the abode of all unclean and unholy affections and thoughts, which hide from him the Divine Presence, and detain him  
in

\* Exod. xxv. 22.



in a miserable and slavish communion with the spirits of darkness: but no sooner doth he turn unto his GOD in the spirit of a true repentance, to become His regenerate child, than a new degree of heavenly and eternal life is opened *within the veil*, in the interior recesses of his converted and consecrated mind. In this new and blessed degree of life is repositied the *Divine Law* for the regulation and government of his life and conduct, according as it is written in the prophet, "*I will put My law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts.*"\* This law is in connexion with the GOD from whom it cometh forth, and is attended and overshadowed at all times by the divine *mercy* and *providence*, figured by the *mercy-seat* and the *golden cherubims*, to instruct us, that whensoever our minds are opened inwards by regeneration, to admit the Divine Spirit and to submit to it's guidance, then we become at the same time subjects of the eternal *mercy* of JESUS CHRIST, and dwell continually under the protection and blessing of His *Omnipotence*, in ourselves. Then the MOST HIGH is perpetually present with us, and we with Him; He dwells in us, and we in Him, according to that blessed promise of JESUS CHRIST to His disciples, when He was about to leave the world, "*At that day ye shall know, that I am in My FATHER, and ye in ME, and I in you.*"†

But secondly—Besides this inmost and most holy  
part

\* Jer. xxxi. 33.

† John xiv. 20.

part *within the veil*, containing the *testimony*, the *mercy-seat* and the *cherubins*, there was in the tabernacle an *interior* and *holy* part which contained the *table of the show-bread*, and the *golden candlestick*, for thus it is written, "*Thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle towards the south.*"\*

The natural and unconverted man, I am well aware, will hardly be persuaded to believe, that the *table of the show-bread* here spoken of, and the *golden candlestick*, had any further signification or meaning than what is expressed in the letter, and therefore he will look no further than to the mere external and natural things which are here described. In the *table* and the *bread* he will see nothing more than a *table* and *bread*, and in the *candlestick* nothing more than a *candlestick*; thus he will make the Word of GOD a mere lifeless record of things inanimate and unedifying, and instead of receiving from it that food of eternal life which it was intended to communicate, he will eat nothing but it's *husks*, and rejecting the *kernel*, will feed only on the *shell*; whereas common sense and experience teach, that the *kernel*, and not the *shell*, contains nourishment, and that the *shell* without the *kernel* is utterly unprofitable to the support of man's life.

Not so the humble, the penitent, and converted disciple of JESUS CHRIST. He believes the  
Word

\* Exod. xxvi. 35.

Word of GOD to contain in it's inward bosom all the mysteries of the divine love and wisdom, yea, to contain GOD Himself, since GOD and His Word can never be separated, according as it is written, "*The Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD.*"\* He believes, therefore, further, that whensoever GOD speaks, He applies the names of natural things to express the spiritual things in which they originate, and of which they are *figures*, and that in this respect the language of GOD differs essentially from all other language. Thus, when such a Christian hears or reads of the *table of show-bread*, and of the *golden candlestick* in the Jewish tabernacle, his enlightened and elevated thought passes instantly through these natural images and expressions, to apprehend and contemplate the spiritual and eternal ideas of the Divine Mind intended to be figured by them. The *table of show-bread*, therefore, suggests to his illuminated understanding something more than a table of mere bread. It suggests an idea of that divine everlasting and spiritual *sustenance* of the holy love of the MOST HIGH, of which elementary bread is but a figure. It brings to his recollection, that his own renewed will is such a *table*, containing in it the immortal food and nourishment of the divine presence, power, and benediction of JESUS CHRIST; that spiritual *bread* of which it is written, "*This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may*

\* John i. 1.

*may eat thereof, and not die.*"\* In like manner the *golden candlestick* does not excite only the idea of a *candlestick*, but of that eternal light of heavenly truth, of which a *candle* and a *candlestick* are corresponding types. It calls to his view, therefore, that spiritual *lamp* of the Divine Word and Wisdom, of which it is written, "*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.*"†

Thus then doth the true Christian gather the most sublime instruction from every part of the Word of GOD, and thus doth every part of the Word of GOD convince him that it is from GOD, by the heavenly wisdom which it both contains and conveys.

But thirdly—There is yet another part of the tabernacle which demands our attention, and which may be called the *outermost* part, as containing things of a *lower* or *more external* order than the two former of which we have been speaking.

This outermost part was distinguished principally by the *brazen altar* and *brazen laver* which were deposited there, the *brazen altar* being intended to receive the *burnt-offerings* and *meat-offerings* of the children of Israel, and the *brazen laver* being meant for *washing*, as it is written, "*Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat; when they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not.*"‡

Behold here again, other "*patterns of things in the*

\* John vi. 50. † Psalm cxix. 105. ‡ Exod. xxx. 19, 20.

*the heavens,*" as the Apostle calls them, equally significant with those which we have already considered, and of a signification so plain and obvious, that it is next to impossible that any should mistake or misinterpret it, who are desirous of attaining to the knowledge of the truth.

For first, with respect to the *brazen altar*, every one may see, that an *altar* is representative of the *holy worship* which is performed upon it, and that therefore the *brazen altar* in the Jewish tabernacle was intended as a figure of the *perpetual holy worship* performed in the regenerate mind, whereby it offers up continually, not *burnt-offerings* and *meat-offerings*, which were only *types* of the true worship, but the more prevailing sacrifices of devout prayer and praise to the ETERNAL FATHER of mercy and of being.

The *brazen altar*, therefore, is mentioned immediately after the *table of the show-bread* and the *golden candlestick*, and in connection with them, to teach us, that all true and acceptable worship of GOD ever proceeds from, and is in connection with, the eternal principles of heavenly *love and light* from GOD; in other words, that we can only so far worship GOD acceptably, as we *know and love* Him, and ascribe to Him, in humble thankfulness, the knowledge and the love which we have received from Him.

Secondly---With respect to the *brazen laver*; who cannot see that this also was a *figure*, and that the thing

thing figured by it is that *spiritual purification* from all evils of life and errors of opinion, which is necessary to introduce the humble penitent into the sacred habitation and presence of the **MOST HOLY GOD?**

It was, therefore, commanded, "*When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not,*" to warn us of the danger of attempting to enter into the holy mysteries of heavenly knowledge and love with impure and un sanctified hearts, and to teach us further the absolute necessity of repentance, of separation from sin, and of purgation from every defiling principle of life, before we can be admitted to the high honour of becoming the tabernacles of **GOD**, of enjoying the consolations of his mercy, and the illuminations of His truth.

Such then are the bright and instructive ideas, which the Jewish tabernacle and all its parts were intended to excite in the minds of the penitent and the humble.

And what hath been above observed concerning the *testimony*, the *mercy-seat*, the *golden cherubim*, the *table of the show-bread*, the *golden candlestick*, the *brazen altar and laver*, might be extended also, if occasion required, to the other constituent parts of the sacred edifice, as to the *altar of incense*, the *curtains*, the *garments of Aaron*, the *anointing oil*, and so forth, all which particulars could never possibly have found a place in the **MOST HOLY**  
WORD

**WORD OF GOD**, unless they had involved in them a divine and spiritual wisdom, and had thus been intended to suggest to us divine and spiritual ideas.

It remains only that we take these things into serious consideration, that so we may attain worthy sentiments of the contents of that Holy Book, which we call the **BOOK OF GOD**. It remains, I say, that we apply the contents of the Sacred Volume to ourselves, as they were intended to be applied by its **DIVINE AUTHOR**, that so we may learn the laws of that eternal kingdom which it was designed to make manifest to us, and may discover at all times the real state of our hearts and lives in respect to that kingdom.

Thus, in regard to the *tabernacle* of which we have been speaking, we ought to be continually asking ourselves the important questions, Is this tabernacle built or building in ourselves? Have we as yet set apart in ourselves a *holy place within the veil*, as the more immediate residence and abode of the **MOST HIGH**? Is the sacred *testimony* there deposited, for the regulation of our lives; and do we see this heaven-born law in continual connection with the unutterable *mercy* and *providence* of its **DIVINE AUTHOR**, typified to us by the *mercy-seat* and the *golden cherubim* above the ark? Moreover, is the *table of the show-bread* set in its proper place, together with the *golden candlestick*; or, to speak without the *figure*, do we experience to our  
comfort

comfort the daily *sustenance* of the divine love represented by the one, and the daily *light* of the divine wisdom represented by the other? Lastly, do we recollect the *brazen altar*, and accordingly offer up devout prayer and praise continually to the **GREAT AUTHOR OF OUR BEING**? And do we remember at the same time the *brazen laver*, as a divine caution, lest we should on any occasion attempt to draw nigh unto the **HOLY GOD** with defiled hearts and unpurified affections?

The answers to these questions, if they be sincere, will soon conduct us into the *holy of holies*, the *presence-chamber* of the **MOST HIGH**, in the inmost centre of our own bosoms, where we shall still find fulfilled, to our unutterable joy, the blessed promise made of old unto Moses by **JEHOVAH**, "*There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims, which are upon the ark of the testimony.*"\* **AMEN.**

\* Exod. xxv. 22.



## SERMON XX.

### On the Golden Calf.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we left Moses, the consecrated leader of the people of GOD, on the top of Mount Sinai, receiving from JEHOVAH the pattern of the tabernacle in which the MOST HIGH was to dwell, which pattern has already been the subject of our consideration.

Our attention is next called to a most melancholy instance of human corruption, such as one would have conceived scarcely possible to occur; for, lo! whilst Moses is engaged in holy communion with his GOD on the consecrated mount, and receiving from GOD those laws of the eternal wisdom which were to conduct the children of Israel to the promised land, this disobedient and gainsaying people persuade

persuade Aaron to make for them a *golden calf*, which they set up and worship as a god, saying, "*These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*"\*

This depravity on the part of the wandering Israelites was the more remarkable, and the more shocking, because they had so lately been eye-witnesses to the miraculous power of JEHOVAH their GOD: they had seen the waters of the *Red Sea* divided by His Almighty Hand, that they might pass over in safety: they had seen the *bitter waters of Marah* made sweet, through the same omnipotent operation: they had quenched their thirst too at the consecrated fountain which was opened in the rock at Horeb: and moreover they had eaten of the *quails* and the *manna* which the same Divine Arm sent down from heaven for their support, when they were ready to perish for want of bread: and yet notwithstanding all these signal interpositions of the MOST HIGH in their favour—notwithstanding both the mercies and the miracles wrought for their preservation and conviction, (such is the corrupt propensity of the human heart) they forget in a moment all their past deliverances, and abandon themselves to the grossest and most abominable idolatries.

What renders the conduct of this perverse people still the more reproachable on this occasion is the consideration, that their heavenly-appointed leader was

\* Exod xxxii. 8.

was at that very time engaged in most devout intercourse with GOD for their instruction and benefit: he was receiving from the mouth of the MOST HIGH those holy laws which were to be at once their guide and their security in the perilous journey which they had undertaken: one would naturally have expected, therefore, that at such a time, their minds would have been duly affected by a sense both of their leader's situation and their own; and that recollecting *his* sacred engagement in communion with GOD, and *their own* want of the fruits of that communion, they would have been faithful to the united calls of duty and of interest, and have been employed rather in erecting altars to JEHOVAH, than in worshipping a molten image, and thus "*changing their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.*"\*

We are struck with astonishment and regret at this perverse folly of the children of Israel; and, indeed, how should it be otherwise? For what can be more astonishing, or what more lamentable than the consideration, that so many human beings should forget their GOD, and the wondrous works which He had done for them, at that very moment when He was concerting the plans of their future blessedness and security with their leader, and at a moment too when they stood in the utmost need of His divine aid and guidance?

We do well then to express both our surprise and  
concern

\* Psalm cvi. 20.

concern on so deplorable an occasion: but do we consider that that occasion is not confined to the history of the wandering Israelites? Do we consider that it is an occasion of daily occurrence in the history of the world at this day, and that the conduct of the generality, even of those who call themselves Christians, is but a repetition of the same folly and perverseness which excite our wonder and our fears in the case of the Israelites of old? Do we consider, in short, that our situation is precisely the same at this day with that of the followers of Moses at Mount Sinai, and that yet notwithstanding our danger; notwithstanding past mercies and miracles; notwithstanding our nearness to the holy mountain and it's GOD; notwithstanding the nearness also of GOD to us, and the perpetual contrivances of His mercy and wisdom to effect our deliverance; we, many of us, even at this awful moment, are "*dancing round a golden calf*," and adopting the profane language of old, "*These be thy gods, O Israel?*"

We start, perhaps, with horror at the reflection on this similarity of cases, and we are unwilling to believe it true—but let us stand still awhile and consider, whether there be not too much cause to suppose, both that our *situation* and our *folly* at this day resemble those of the idolatrous Jews at Mount Sinai.

And first, with regard to our *situation*—If we attend to *realities* more than to *appearances*, and to *things*

*things* more than to *names*, we must all be forced to see and acknowledge, that our journey through this world bears an exact resemblance to the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness of Mount Sinai. We are going, as they went, towards a *promised land*; we have here “*no continuing city, but seek one to come*;”\* moreover we are called to the possession of that land by the same GOD who called them, and are conducted thither by the same Almighty Power; we are exposed also to similar dangers, and assaulted by similar adversaries; we have experienced too in the course of our journey like mercies and miracles: But what renders the resemblance still more striking, is the consideration, that we are as near to the mount of GOD, and thereby to GOD Himself, as ever the children of Israel were, and have besides both GOD and His holy mountain as near to us. Our MOSES too is gone up into the holy mount, and from thence, if we will open our ears, we may still hear GOD speaking, and speaking too for our benefit and instruction, because the speech of GOD is the Word of GOD, and in our Bibles we have this Word, or divine speech, ever uttering what is “*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*”†

Such then is the resemblance between our *situation* and that of the Israelites of old at Mount Sinai: And would to GOD that the resemblance ended here,

\* Heb. xiii. 14. † 2 Tim. iii. 16.

here, and that we did not imitate them in their *folly* also, as well as in their *situation* ! Would to GOD, that whilst we enjoy the blessings and the privileges by which they were distinguished, we were wise to make a better use of them, by guarding against the thoughtlessness and impiety into which they were betrayed ! But will truth and experience warrant us in concluding that this has been our case ? Let us consider this point also with the attention which it deserves.

The Israelites, to their shame, whilst their pious leader is communing with GOD on Mount Sinai, forget at once both him and their GOD, and are seen *dancing round a golden calf* in all the profaneness of idolatrous worship. If we regard the mere *letter* of this history, it is true indeed, that it will not apply to ourselves, for according to the *letter*, we have certainly neither *made* a golden calf, nor *danced* around it. But the question is, have we not done this in the *spirit*, that is to say, have we not done it as to our *affections* and *thoughts* ? For if we have thus *danced round a golden calf* in the *spirit*, it is of little consequence whether we have done so with our bodies or not. It is the *spirit* of man which constitutes the man, and not the body separate from the *spirit* ; and therefore, whatsoever enormity or disorder is committed in the *spirit*, that enormity and disorder is committed by the man, whether his body is concerned in it or not : just as in the case of the crime of *murder* ; *he that hateth his*  
his

*his brother is a murderer,\** whether his bodily hands have, or have *not* been imbrued in his brother's blood.

But methinks I hear it asked—How can we *dance round a golden calf* in the spirit? or what is this new species of *spiritual idolatry*, to the danger of which we are exposed? We believe in one GOD who made the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein; and we reject all *idolatry* as abominable; how then can we, in any sense of the words, be said to worship a *golden calf*?

I am well aware that questions of this sort will be asked on the occasion, especially by those who have never been at the pains to examine well in their own minds into the true nature and meaning of *spiritual idolatry*. Persons of this description, alas! are but too apt to fancy themselves secure from that terrible enormity, merely because they never bend their bodily knees before an idol of gold or silver, of wood or stone, not recollecting that the sin of idolatry is a *sin of the spirit*, consisting in a wrong state of the heart, that is to say, of the love and affections in regard to the one true and living GOD. Accordingly the apostle declares expressly concerning the sin of *covetousness*, that it is *idolatry*;† and he speaks also of some *whose GOD is their belly, who mind earthly things*;‡ plainly teaching us, that the sin of *idolatry* consists in a perverted state of the affections, and that in whatsoever case

we

\* 1 John iii. 15. † Coloss. iii. 5. ‡ Philip. iii. 19.

we exalt any thing above GOD and His love in our hearts, we convert that very thing into an idol, and make it the proper and only object of our worship.

It deserves consideration on this occasion, that the idolatry of the Jews of old, in setting up and *worshipping a golden calf*, originated in their own corrupt affections and thoughts, in consequence of which they had forgotten their leader Moses, and the GOD by whom they had been so wonderfully and miraculously conducted and preserved. It was not therefore the golden calf which made them idolaters, but it was their idolatry which made the *golden calf*. In other words, it was not the *figure* or *image* which they worshipped, that constituted their idolatry, but this their sin consisted in that love of the mere things of sense, and of the pleasures thence derived, which had first led them to forget their divine leader, and then to set up a *golden idol* in His place: They did not love to retain the true GOD in their thoughts and affections, but found their chief delight in sensual gratifications and indulgencies, as it is written of them on the occasion, "*The people sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play.*"\* It was, therefore, their *sensuality* which made and set up the *golden calf*, and this image was nothing else but a *figure* or *external manifestation* of the corrupt principle in which it originated. It did not beget that principle, but was begotten by it.

Here

\* Exod. xxxii. 6.



Here then, if our eyes be at all open to spiritual discernment, we may be enabled to see, how we also, when perhaps we are least aware of it, may be *dancing round a golden calf*, like the profane Israelites of old.

The question is not concerning the posture or gesture of our bodies, but concerning the posture and gesture of our spirits. It is possible that our bodily hands may never be employed in making, or our bodily feet in dancing round a golden image, and yet we may, nevertheless, both make such an image, and dance round it, in the greatest reality. For if our minds be yet more delighted with the things of sense, than with the things of GOD; if our chief gratifications be still derived from *sensual pleasures*, more than from heavenly joys; if in our short journey through this perishable world, we forget our MOSES on the holy mount, together with the divine mercies and miracles by which we have been hitherto conducted and preserved; if in this forgetfulness we think it safe to banish the thoughts of eternity from our hearts, that we may *sit down to eat and to drink, and rise up to play*; if, in short, our affections be still earthly, and though we make a show of worshipping the GOD of heaven, yet we worship him only with our bodies, whilst our spirits are *dancing* round the altar of inferior and polluted indulgencies; how plain is it to see in this case, (whether we are willing to allow it or not) that in the strictest and most awful reality we are both  
*making*

*making and dancing round a golden calf*, and that all the difference between the sin of the Israelites and our's is this, that they worship the calf *consistently* and *uniformly*, both with mind and body; whereas we worship it *inconsistently* and *dividedly*, giving to GOD the worship of our bodies, whilst we devote our better part, our immortal spirits, to the *golden idol* of our own corruptions.

To conclude—Let us learn from what has been said; to adore the divine providence of the MOST HIGH, who, in recording the above idolatry of the wandering Israelites, has been pleased in His grace and mercy to warn us against being betrayed into the same enormity.

And whensoever from henceforth we are led to think of the *golden calf* in the wilderness, let us not confine our thoughts to a *calf of gold*, but let us learn to extend them to that idolatrous and abominable principle in the human heart, of which the *golden calf* was but a *figure*: let us call this principle by it's proper name, SENSUAL PLEASURE: And when we read further of the foolish Israelites *dancing* around this *golden idol*, let the awful and disgusting picture suggests to us the unhappy and polluted state of all those human minds, who never having entered into the ways of sincere repentance before GOD, and conversion to Him, are still the slaves of mere *sensual delight*, and *dancing* with their best affections and thoughts about a *calf of gold*

*gold*, instead of entering into and tasting the purer and more exalted joys of the love of GOD.

Lastly, let us take good heed unto ourselves that we be not found in this miserable and defiled state. For this purpose, let us attend well to all the *pleasures of sense*, which solicit our regard; and let us watch over their influence, lest at any time they should exalt themselves above *spiritual joys*. It is not meant hereby that we should annihilate either our *senses* or their *delights*: it is only meant that we should exalt the love of GOD and of our neighbour, together with all the sublime gratifications flowing from that love, above every indulgence of the mere sensitive and animal life: it is meant, I say, that we should introduce a right *subordination* amongst all our joys, so that the *lower* may never take place of the *higher*, but that each preserving it's proper order, *all* may thereby stand in the Divine order, and thereby under the Divine administration, protection, and blessing.

If we are wise thus to regulate our affections by the eternal principles of heavenly love, and purity, and truth from JESUS CHRIST, we shall then be in no danger of being found amongst the idolaters of old, *dancing round a golden calf*. On the contrary, our *dance* will then be about the altar of the SUPREME MERCY AND TRUTH OF THE MOST HIGH GOD: and in this blessed *dance* we shall see a heavenly order introduced into all the inferior joys of sense, by virtue whereof they

will no longer prove injurious, but will rather administer to our bliss. Thus will be fulfilled in our well-arranged minds those blessed words of the LORD to His people, "*Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O Virgin of Israel; thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the DANCES OF THEM THAT MAKE MERRY.*"\* AMEN.

\* Jer. xxxi. 4.

## SERMON XXI.

### The Manna Loathed.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**O**UR last discourse on these words, contained the history of a remarkable corruption on the part of the wandering Israelites in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in that they became the worshippers of a *golden calf*, during the time that their heavenly-appointed leader was communing with GOD on the holy mountain.

We come now to another instance of their depravity equally memorable and to be lamented ; for lo! they are not advanced far from Mount Sinai in their way to the promised land, before they begin to *loathe the manna* with which they had been fed, and to require *flesh* for the gratification of their inordinate appetites ; for thus it is written on the occasion,  
“ *The*

*“ The mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick; but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes.”\**

It is never an agreeable thing to look at human corruptions, yet nevertheless, it is sometimes both expedient and profitable. The providence of GOD hath accordingly, in His wonderful Word, been pleased to record the history of the *transgressions* of His people, as well as of his own mercies and loving-kindnesses, to teach us, by *examples*, both the heinousness and the danger of sin, and thus to lead us to a stricter scrutiny and a more vigilant watchfulness over ourselves. Indeed, there is every reason to suppose, that the knowledge of our disorders, in our present fallen and degraded state, is absolutely necessary to conduct us to the saving knowledge of GOD, both of what He *is* to us, and of what He is continually *doing* for us. This, at least, is certain, that the mercy of the MOST HIGH is principally manifested in delivering us from our corruptions, and hence we may reasonably conclude that the wisdom of the MOST HIGH requires, that we should diligently note all the workings, tendencies, and effects of those corruptions both in ourselves

\* Numb. xi. 4 to 7.

ourselves and others, since it is impossible we should be *delivered* from them any further, than as they are seen, acknowledged, and renounced.

Here then we may discover the true ground and reason both why GOD, in His Holy Word, hath thought proper to record the above history concerning his rebellious people in the wilderness, and also why it is our duty and our interest to attend well to the admonition of wisdom contained in it. GOD hath been pleased to record the history for our use, that seeing the nature and consequences of a great enormity in others, we ourselves might be more upon our guard against falling into the same: It is, therefore, both our duty and our interest to attend to it's admonition, because we can never be better employed than in scrutinizing and bringing to light all those hidden depravities of our hearts, which would at any time either oppose the counsels, or separate us from the mercy and presence of our HEAVENLY FATHER.

But it will be asked by some—What was this great enormity of the children of Israel on this occasion, and in what did it consist? They had travelled long in a barren wilderness, and they began, as was natural for them, to hunger after flesh, which had been so long denied them: But where could be the crime of all this? or how can this history be at all applicable to ourselves, who are never likely to be placed in the same situation?

Questions like these may be expected from all  
such

such superficial readers of the **WORD OF GOD**, as look no further than to its *literal* history and meaning, without ever regarding the *spiritual* and *deep wisdom* of the **MOST HIGH**, which that literal history involves. Such readers wonder, and must needs wonder, how the mere act of *lusting after flesh* could be imputed to the hungry Israelites as a sin: And they are disposed to think harshly of **GOD**, who could be so cruel as to punish His people with such severity, for so apparently trivial an offence.

But let such readers now only open their eyes, or rather suffer them to be opened, to discern the internal and spiritual meaning of the **WORD OF GOD**. Let them only be willing to allow with St. Paul, that the events which befel the wandering Israelites "*happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*"\* Let them, I say, only cherish such just and worthy sentiments of **THE ETERNAL WORD**, by believing that it contains the deep wisdom of Him who spake it: And how will their sentiments be immediately changed respecting both the nature and enormity of the crime under consideration!

They will then see, that the sin of the children of Israel in *lusting for flesh, and in loathing the heavenly manna*, did not consist merely in the appetite

\* 1 Cor. x. 6.



tite for one kind of bodily food more than for another, but that it consisted in what was intended to be *figured* by such appetite, viz. in a wrong state of their affections respecting the things of GOD, His Word and kingdom. They no longer retained a relish for *spiritual* delights, but were anxious and eager to return again to those merely *natural* and *sensual* pleasures from which they had been called. *They remembered the fish which they had eaten in Egypt freely*, all those lower gratifications of the mere bodily senses, which, in their natural and unconverted state, had been greedily devoured; but they forgot the things which GOD had done for them, and all the heavenly manna of holy joy and wisdom with which He had fed them, and in consequence of such forgetfulness *their soul was dried away*, and they said, *there is nothing but this manna before our eyes*. In short they were anxious to live again unto themselves and the world, rather than in the fear and love of that **HEAVENLY FATHER** who had so mercifully called and so miraculously conducted them to Himself and to His eternal kingdom.

Here then if we are disposed to have our eyes opened, we may be enabled to see, not only in what the sin of the children of Israel consisted, when they began to *loathe the heavenly manna, and to require meat for their lusts*, but also how this sin was intended to be an ensample or type unto us, *that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted*.

For

For are there any amongst us, who have set out on our journey towards the heavenly Canaan, and have afterwards been discouraged by it's difficulties and labours? Are there any amongst us who having renounced forbidden pleasures, and tasted of the heavenly manna of divine consolations, have yet lost again all relish for these holy joys, from a secret desire of returning back to former pollutions? Are there any amongst us, who have for a season been delighted with the things of GOD and ETERNITY, from a full conviction that they are both more real and more important than all other things, and yet have suffered this conviction, afterwards, to lose it's force and efficacy in our minds? Are there any amongst us, who have once been admitted to taste of the great love of GOD, and yet have afterwards slighted it? Who have seen the defilement of mere sensual gratifications, and yet have afterwards cherished it? Who have looked in, as it were, at the gates of heaven and paradise, and yet have forgotten what we saw there? or, who, have once closed the doors of the kingdom of darkness, and yet have afterwards wished them again open?—How plain is it to see, that in all such cases, we are repeating again both the folly and the transgression of those wandering Israelites of old, who, from a like cause, adopted the profane language, and said, "*Now our soul is dried away; there is nothing but this manna before our eyes!*"

Adored then be the wisdom and the providence  
of

of our **HEAVENLY FATHER**, who, in recording the follies and the transgressions of His people of old, intended to warn us of the danger of falling into the same fatal snare, which the great enemy of all truth and righteousness had too successfully laid for them!

But whilst we return our most grateful acknowledgments to the **ETERNAL** for this instance of His loving-kindness towards us, let us be careful to profit by the bright wisdom which it presents to our view.

There is no temptation to which we are more exposed, there is none also more formidable, than what the great adversary of our salvation is ever suggesting under the secret insinuation, that religion is a morose and severe service; that it imposes unnecessary restraints; that it deprives us of all true pleasures; and that in calling us to submit to it's burdensome yoke, it would separate us from every *natural* and *rational* satisfaction for which we were created.

Such I say, is the temptation arising from the kingdom of darkness, to which we are, all of us, especially if we be young converts to **GOD** and heaven, exposed in our Christian course.

Against this temptation we have no security, we can have none, but in the wisdom of the **ETERNAL WORD**, which has been pleased for our instruction and protection to record the above history of the back-sliding Israelites.

We can all easily see the folly of this deluded people, who for the *fish*, the *cucumbers*, the *melons*, the *leeks*, the *onions*, and the *garlick of Egypt*, were willing to forget and forego at once all the treasures and the blessings of that promised land for which they had set out, under the guidance of heaven, and towards which they had now so long been journeying. And shall we forget and forego the treasures and the blessings of our promised land, for things alike little and contemptible with the *fish*, the *cucumbers*, the *melons*, the *leeks*, the *onions*, and the *garlick of Egypt*? Shall we renounce the love of the MOST HIGH, because an enemy would suggest that we may be greater gainers by the love of this world? Shall we turn our backs on the eternal wisdom, because a deceiver would insinuate, that the pleasures of sense are more exquisite than the delights of truth? Shall we bid adieu to GOD, to heaven, to everlasting blessedness, because the *father of lies* would represent them either as things of doubtful existence, or, if real, scarcely worth our pursuit? Shall we (especially when we have now many of us gone so far on our journey, when we are arrived nearly at the gates of the eternal world, and see the things of this world receding fast both from our enjoyment and our sight) shall we, I say, under these circumstances, suffer our eyes to be put out again by folly, that we may return again unto the darkness and misery of mere animal gratifications? Surely the example of the wanderers in the wilder-

ness of old must sufficiently convince us of the miserable infatuation of such a conduct as this.

Let us then keep this example continually before our eyes ; and let us suffer it to teach us continually the lesson of heaven-born wisdom, which it was designed to convey. Let it teach us, I say, that the joys and delights proceeding from the love and the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST are infinitely superior to all the pleasures of sense, or the gratifications of worldly affections. Let it teach us further, that the pleasures of sense and the gratifications of mere worldly affections, unless sanctified by the love of GOD, quickly destroy both themselves and their possessors: For so we read of the unhappy people under consideration, that "*whilst the meat, which they lusted after, was yet in their mouths, the heavy wrath of GOD came upon them, and slew the wealthiest of them.*"\* Such is ever the miserable condition of those, who would enjoy *natural pleasures* separate from those *spiritual delights* which were intended at once to sanctify, to elevate, and to preserve them.

Would we then escape this misery, and pursue stedfastly the great ends of our being, the path of our true happiness? Let us be watchful to exalt continually in ourselves the joys arising from the love of GOD above all inferior joys. Let us force every pleasure of sense to bow down and acknowledge thus its heavenly origin. And further, let

US

\* Psalm lxxviii. 31.

us never fancy that religion was intended to debar us of, or to destroy any rational, any natural delight which is not in contradiction to the law of GOD : for religion was not designed to annihilate, but to sanctify ; not to destroy but to save, our inferior joys, by conjoining them with the supreme joy. Let us then be careful to fulfil this intention of pure religion, and then pure religion, or rather it's GOD, will fulfil his intention in us, by communicating to all our joys their proper *life*, according to the tenor of His own blessed words, which will apply to our satisfactions, as well as to ourselves, *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*"\* AMEN.

\* John x. 10.

## SERMON XXII.

On the Spies sent out to search the Land.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N several former discourses on these words we have taken a view of some of the most distinguished events which befel the children of Israel, from their first miraculous call out of Egypt, to their advancement in their journey towards the promised land.

We now come to the consideration of a circumstance not less edifying and interesting than those which precede it; for behold, as the heaven-directed wanderers approach near unto the borders of Canaan "*The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.*"\* We read afterwards, that Mo-

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\* Numb. xiii. 1, 2.

ses did as the LORD commanded him, and that the men whom he sent out to search the land, "*came unto the brook of Eschol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates and of the figs.*"\* Nevertheless they were not agreed amongst themselves touching the report which they made of the land, for we read further, that "*some of them brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search, it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.*"† Others again brought up a good report, saying, "*The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey.*"‡ We read, lastly, that the children of Israel were disposed to reject the "*good report,*" and to believe the "*evil one,*"§ and that, on this account, they greatly displeased the LORD, and brought upon themselves this terrible judgment, "*Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness, and ye shall not come into the land which I swear to make you dwell therein.*"||

There are two distinct objects of consideration, arising out of the above historical facts, which demand our particular attention.

First,

\* Numb. xiii. 25. † Numb. xiii. 32. ‡ Numb. xiv. 7, 8.

§ Numb. xiv. 10. || Numb. xiv. 29, 30.



First, What was intended to be signified and represented to us by the command which JEHOVAH gave unto Moses, to "*send out men to search the land.*"

Secondly, What was further intended to be signified and represented by the "*different reports*" of those men, and by the children of Israel "*rejecting the good report, and believing the evil one.*"

I shall begin with the first of these considerations.

When we find it recorded in the Word of GOD, that "*JEHOVAH commanded Moses to send out men to search the land,*" we are forced to conclude, that this command must needs involve in it some deeper and more hidden meaning than what appears in the letter of it.

For all the commands of JEHOVAH, as proceeding from Himself, and being consequently filled with His eternal life and wisdom, must of necessity contain in them *living* and *spiritual* ideas, suitable to the Divinity in which they originate, and to the Divine life and wisdom with which they are replenished.

When JEHOVAH therefore speaks of a *land*, and of *searching out a land*, we can never suppose that He has no further meaning in such expressions than what is usually annexed to them in the language of men, for this would be to suppose that there is nothing more of *life*, of *wisdom*, and of *spirituality* contained in the Word of GOD, than in the words of men. And if we suppose so, what  
difference

difference do we then make between what GOD speaks and what man speaks? If we annex to the speech of GOD only the same *natural* and *terrestrial* ideas which we annex to the speech of man, we must certainly deprive it of all that *spirituality*, *that divinity of sentiment* by which it is so pre-eminently distinguished, and of consequence, instead of testifying that He speaks "*as never man spake*,"\* we invert the testimony by the gross and criminal assertion, that GOD speaks as man, and man as GOD.

Besides—it is allowed to be a distinguishing character of the Word of GOD, that "*it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness.*"† But what profit now either of *doctrine*, of *reproof*, of *correction*, or of *instruction in righteousness*, is to be found in the above historical relation concerning the "*spies whom GOD commanded to be sent to search out the land*," if we regard it only according to the sense of the letter? Of what importance, or of what edification is it to us at this day, to be told, that GOD gave Moses such a command, if it be supposed to relate only to the children of Israel exploring the land of Canaan? We are compelled, therefore, from this consideration to conclude, that the whole of this memorable history, together with all its parts, must needs involve in it divine and spiritual intentions, worthy of that all-wise GOD, in whom it originates, and communicative

\* John vii. 46. † 2 Tim. iii. 16.

communicative likewise of *profitable doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness* to that creature man, for whose spiritual edification and use it was mercifully and principally intended.

What those divine and spiritual intentions are, which are involved in the history under consideration, will be easily discovered and conceived by the humble and serious mind. Thanks be to that divine mercy which first uttered the words of eternal life, that their important meaning is neither of difficult or of doubtful interpretation with such as apply sincerely to the **DIVINE AUTHOR** for illumination and instruction. For in the case before us, what eye, which looks upwards toward heaven for the guidance of the light of the eternal truth, cannot see, that when **GOD** speaks of a *land*, He doth not mean only a portion of this lower earth, called the *land of Canaan*, or any other land, but He must needs mean what was signified and represented by that *land*, viz. the *heavenly Canaan*, the *land of uprightness* as it is called by the prophet,\* in other words, the kingdom of heaven, the habitation of the blessed in the eternal world? In like manner, when **GOD** speaks of *searching out a land*, what considerate mind cannot see, that here again also the **ALMIGHTY** applies a *natural image* to convey a *spiritual idea*, and that the spiritual idea intended to be conveyed, relates to the exploration and contemplation of that eternal world, towards  
which

\* Isaiah xxvi. 10.

which we are all hastening, and of those eternal principles of divine righteousness and truth in which that world is founded, and which are to be our preparation and qualification for admittance into it's blessedness?

Let us stand still awhile to consider the tendency of GOD'S command to Moses to *send out men to search the land*, according to this view of it's spiritual meaning and design.

The MOST HIGH hath been pleased, by the revelation of Himself and of His kingdom, to announce to us the great certainties of the existence of an invisible world, and of our close connection with it's important and everlasting realities. In the sacred book of that revelation we read, that there is a heaven, and that there is a hell ; that each also hath it's unseen, it's innumerable inhabitants ; and that we ourselves, whatsoever appearances may be presented to the contrary, are not only approaching fast to take our eternal places in one or other of those two kingdoms, but are likewise, even during our abode in this world, entering into some sort of consociation and conjunction with them.

We learn thus, that our present life is but a *passage* to another, and that the *present* world which we inhabit, so far from being the *termination* of our existence, is intended only as an *introduction* to a *future* one. We are placed here as it were but *for a moment*, and are then to be transplanted to the abodes of our *eternal destination*. We are thus inhabitants

habitants as it were of *two worlds* at the same time, and whilst with our *bodies* we converse with men here below, and are employed in the concerns of our animal life, our *immortal spirits* are in consociation with their kindred beings in the eternal world, and taking up their everlasting abodes accordingly. Our senses, indeed, would persuade us that the material objects with which we are surrounded, and the persons with whom we converse, have here a fixed and durable being, but the wisdom of GOD assures us, and our own experience confirms the divine testimony, that all things here below are transitory and perishable; that they are only *shadows* of those eternal things from which they derive their birth; and that nothing is permanent, nothing is real, but GOD, and that invisible kingdom of His glory for the possession and enjoyment of which we were originally created.

But notwithstanding all this weight of evidence and demonstration with which the eternal things of GOD and of His kingdom are announced and confirmed to us, it is yet possible, and every day's experience proves the sad possibility, that we may remain altogether unaffected by it, and careless as to its consequences. The outward visible things of this world, uniting with our internal corruptions, may so hide from our views the inward invisible realities of the other world, that we shall believe nothing about them, or if we are convinced of their *existence*, we shall not feel their *importance*. Even  
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the attention necessary to conduct our worldly business, and to regulate our concerns and engagements here below amongst men—even this necessary attention, I say, may, if we are not upon our guard, cast a veil upon the bright evidences of another world, and render our prospects beyond the grave both obscure and comfortless. Thus we shall pass through this life as in a dream, and mistaking *shadows* for *substances*, *phantoms of happiness* for *happiness itself*, we shall never discover our fatal mistake till the trump of GOD awakes us to conviction in our future state of existence.

Behold here then the kind and merciful intention of our heavenly FATHER, manifested in the command which he formerly gave unto Moses, to *send out men to search the land* towards which they were journeying!

He meant this command, like all the other laws which He gave on the same occasion, for our instruction and for our practice. He meant to teach us hereby this great and edifying truth, that if we wish to be fully and profitably convinced of the grand certainties and importances of that eternal land, the heavenly Canaan, towards which we are journeying; if we wish to be no longer deluded by our senses and our corruptions, touching the weighty things of GOD and the awful concerns of another world; if we wish to view things as they really are, and no more to mistake shadows for substances, phantoms for realities; we must then do, as the  
 .leader

leader of the people of Israel did under similar circumstances---we must *send out men to search the land*; in other words, we must send our best affections and thoughts to heaven before us; and bring down thence the *grapes* of the heavenly *Eschol* for our conviction and our comfort; we must use the powers and faculties which the ALMIGHTY has given us, to *explore* the hidden laws and principles of His invisible kingdom; we must connect the things of *this* world with those of *another*, our engagements, our business, our interests and concerns here *below* with those more important engagements, that more important business, interest, and concern which we have *above*; we must confirm thus in our own minds the doctrines of the Divine Word, by labouring through the Divine grace, to convince ourselves, that this world is comparatively as *nothing*, and that the eternal world is *all*; that we are here passing as it were through *shadows*, but approaching towards *substances*; that nothing can properly be called *real*, nothing *substantial*, but JESUS CHRIST, and His eternal kingdom, and that therefore our grand concern in our present state of existence is, to connect ourselves, by repentance, love, and obedience, with that great GOD AND SAVIOUR, and with all those enduring certainties of His kingdom, power, and glory, which, though *unseen*, are yet *near* to us, and though *not manifest to our bodily senses*, are yet the proper, the most excellent *objects of our mental affections and thoughts*.

Having

Having thus then considered the *first* point presented to our view by the command of the **MOST HIGH**, to “*send out men to search the land,*” I should now proceed to consider what was further intended to be made known to us by the *different reports* of those men ; but the present time will only allow me to press upon your attention and practice the vast importance of the above history from what has been already said concerning it.

Certain it is, that the **ALMIGHTY** has not only given us a command to *search out* and explore that *heavenly land* for which he hath created us, but He hath also given, and continually gives us power to comply with that command, by enabling us to raise our affections and thoughts towards Him and His kingdom as often as we please. There is not a moment of our lives in which we are left destitute of this power : there is not therefore a moment of our lives, in which, if we were so disposed, we might not ascend up into heaven, with our better desires, and place ourselves at the feet of **JESUS CHRIST**, and implore His mercy, and at the same time explore the laws and customs of that eternal land, and also bring down thence some of it's heavenly fruits, it's *grapes*, it's *pomegranates*, and it's *figs*, for our refreshment and confirmation.

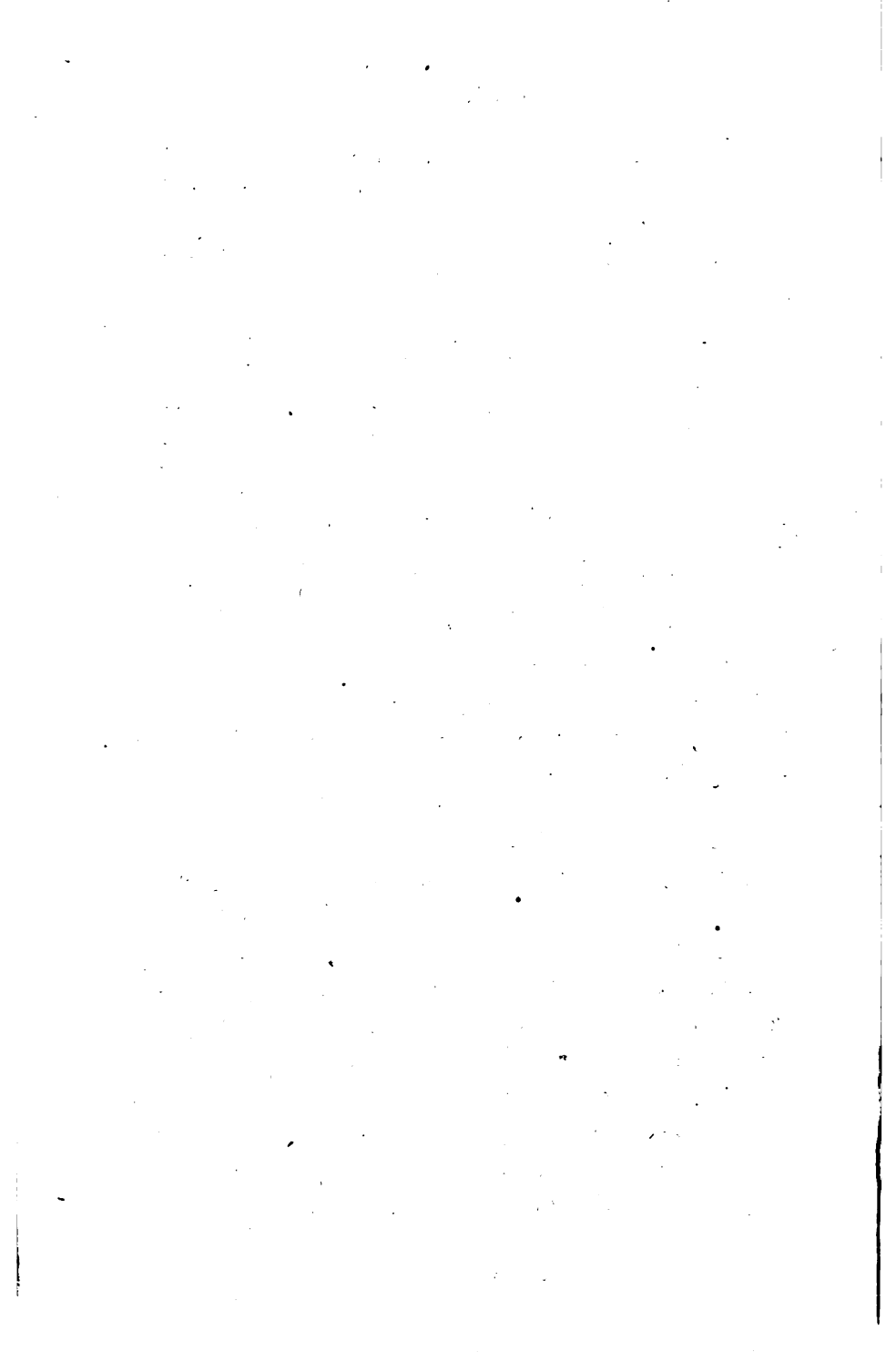
Let it then from henceforth become our great concern to use the power which the **MOST HIGH** hath given us, that He might deliver us from our sins, and exalt us to Himself. Let us accustom our affections



affections and thoughts frequently to ascend above the lower things of this world, to contemplate and delight in those eternal realities of GOD and of His invisible kingdom, to which he so mercifully and tenderly invites us. In the language of inspired wisdom "*let us walk about the heavenly Zion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof,*"\* till our minds are fully persuaded, not only of the *existence* of the heavenly city, but also of its *blessedness*; not only that *it is*, but also that it is what of all other places most concerns us to be acquainted with.

Thus shall we no longer be distracted by any doubts concerning that invisible world towards which we are approaching, but being convinced of its blessed certainties, both by what we *see* and by what we *feel* concerning it, we shall be enabled to bear the happy testimony with the spies of old, who said, "*The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us, a land flowing with milk and honey.*" And being thus fully satisfied as to the great *end* of our destination, we shall be led with more unwearied diligence, and more undaunted courage, to apply to the *means* necessary to conduct us to it. We shall therefore be careful to "*live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, always abounding in the work of the LORD,*" from this best of all motives, because "*we know that our labour will not be in vain in the LORD.*"† AMEN.

\* Psalm xlviii. 12. † Tit. ii. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 58.



## SERMON XXIII.

On the two different Reports of the Spies.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we were led to the consideration of the remarkable history of the *spies*, whom Moses was commanded to send out to search the land of Canaan, towards which the children of Israel were then journeying in the wilderness.

Those *spies* and their *search*, it was shown, are figurative of that spiritual *search* or *inquiry*, respecting the heavenly Canaan, which every man is commanded to make in his own mind and understanding, that so he may form just apprehensions of that eternal state or kingdom towards which he is so fast approaching, and being thereby convinced of its *nearness*, its *certainties*, and its *comforts*, may be

impelled by a stronger affection to go up and take possession of it.

Having thus then considered the heavenly instruction intended to be transmitted to us in the history of these *spies*, I shall now proceed to consider, as was proposed, the further lesson of interesting wisdom designed for our use in the *different reports* which those *spies* made concerning the land which they were commanded to search.

And first—Some of them, we read, brought up an *evil report* of the land, and when they returned to the children of Israel, they expressed their sentiments in these discouraging words, “*We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. The land through which we have gone to search, it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it were men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.*”\*

Thus did these spies discourage the children of Israel, for we read further, that the people, on hearing this report, “*lifted up their voices, and cried, and wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said unto them, Would GOD that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, would GOD we had died in this wilderness!*”\*

\* Numb. xiii. 31, 32, 33. † Numb. xiv. 1, 2.

We lament, and we lament justly, that these deluded *spies* should so miserably impose both upon themselves and others, in a case of such vast moment; and we are further grieved to think that the children of Israel also should suffer themselves to be so easily misled by such an ill-grounded report received from such ill-informed reporters.

But do we consider, and consider seriously, that the same lamentable circumstances are transacting every day, and that the *evil report* of those spies of old is but a *figure* of that far more mistaken and more mischievous *report*, by which we are in danger of perpetually imposing, both upon ourselves and others, in the great concerns of GOD and eternity?

It has already been shown, in treating of the *spies* themselves, that they are *representative figures* of the thoughts of man going forth to contemplate and explore the invisible things of the kingdom of GOD, and the principles of that heavenly and regenerate life necessary to be formed in himself, in order to his admittance into that kingdom and it's everlasting blessedness.

How plain then is it to see, that the spies, who bring up an *evil report* of the land which they are sent to explore, are likewise *representative figures*, denoting all those, in all ages and places, who, in their thoughts and contemplations about GOD and His kingdom, see nothing but *difficulties*, and thus are perpetually *discouraging* both themselves and  
 others,

others, by the view of the *unsurmountable hardships* which obstruct the way between them and the heavenly Canaan!

Such are the thoughts and contemplations of those faint-hearted Christians who speculate about GOD and heaven with their *understandings*, whilst they are destitute of the pure love of GOD and heaven in their *wills and affections*. For thought without affection is on all occasions cowardly and dispirited, timorous in it's counsels, and still more feeble in it's exertions. It frequently creates difficulties where they are *not*, and where they *are*, it magnifies them vastly beyond their true size and proportion. Even in *natural* things we find that this is perpetually the case, and that men are never magnanimous, but in the degree in which they have a dear interest at stake, be it of gain or of glory. Irresolution is thus the constant offspring of *cold affections*, and in vain shall we look either for boldness of design, or for ardour of execution in any project, unless the *heart* be first *well warmed* with a desire of attaining some beloved object.

Behold here then the instructive lesson presented to our view in the history of those *spies* of the children of Israel, who *brought up an evil report* of the land, which they were sent to search!

They were designed to teach us, that in all our thoughts about GOD, and His kingdom, and our own eternal life, we should be careful to think under the influence of a *warm*, that is to say, of a *heavenly* affection,

affection, grounded in the pure love of GOD and of our neighbour, and of the inconceivable sanctity and blessedness of that love. Our thoughts would thus be animated, strong, and invigorating; whereas without such affection they will be irresolute, unsteady and discouraging. We shall be alarmed with every difficulty, without having the courage either to surmount or oppose it. The victory over our passions will appear to us a thing impossible, and we shall fancy we see a *giant* in every one of them, whilst we shall seem as *grasshoppers* both to them and to ourselves. Our corruptions will thus gain strength by our timidity, and we shall never be able to overcome them, because we shall want the resolution necessary to engage us in the combat. Still less shall be able to attain to that blessed order of heavenly and regenerate life to which the Gospel calls us, because we shall hardly believe it to be attainable. As therefore the children of Israel *lifted up their voices, and cried, and wept*, on this occasion, *murmuring against Moses and against Aaron*, so also shall we; and our whole lives will be spent in unprofitable sadness, dejection, and complaint against GOD and His laws, not because GOD and His laws are really either severe or unreasonable, but because we want the *love* and *affection* necessary to make them *easy* and *delightful* to us.

For let us turn now our eyes from these *evil reporters*, to consider, in the second place, what we are to learn from those more courageous and better-instructed

instructed spies, who brought up a *good report* of the land which they were sent to search.

The report of these spies is expressed in these animated and animating words, "*The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then will He bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them; fear them not.*"\*

Behold here the spirited language and bold sentiment of all the children of GOD, in every age, and in every nation, who, in contemplating on the MOST HIGH and on that eternal kingdom or state of heavenly life, to which the divine mercy invites them, are influenced in their thoughts by a *warm love and affection* towards the sublime objects of their holy contemplation!

No dangers affright, no difficulties discourage them. They see no *giants* in the way, either to alarm or to intimidate. Elevated above the gain and glory of this lower world, and animated by the prospect of that eternal gain and glory presented to their acceptance in the favour and kingdom of JESUS CHRIST, they feel none of that *timidity* which is the child of selfish or earthly affections, but are inspired with all that courage and magnanimity, which ever spring from and accompany the love

\* Numb. xiv. 7, 8, 9.



love of the sovereign, the supreme GOOD. But let us recal the expressions and sentiments of these *good reporters*, that we may give them a more deliberate attention.

*“The land (say they) which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then will He bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them; fear them not.”* It is the same thing as if they had said, “We have carefully viewed, and well considered in our minds, that state of pure regenerate life, to which the LORD our GOD hath called us in His mercy and kingdom, and we find it to be *good*, yea, to be *exceeding good*, so as infinitely to excel all other things that can be called *good*. Our grand concern therefore, is to take heed that the LORD *may delight in us*, by our loving and doing such things as please Him, for if *He delight in us, then will He bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey*, for then shall we possess all that we can desire, since every thing that can be called good, and holy, and wise, and happy, the *milk and honey* of every spiritual prosperity, is involved in this high character, to become such that the LORD *may delight in us*. *Only, therefore, let us not rebel against the LORD*, by loving and doing such things as displease Him; *neither let us fear the people of the land*, by magnifying

fyng the power of our spiritual enemies; for *the people of the land are bread for us*—our enemies, and all the oppositions which they excite, will be made to administer to our spiritual *nourishment* and *strength*, whensoever we are only careful not to cherish those corruptions, in which the power of our enemies consists. We will not therefore henceforth *be afraid of any foes* that would oppose our entrance into the blessed land, because *their defence is departed from them*, for, *if GOD be for us, who can be against us?* And GOD will certainly be *for us* whilst we set our faces against our sins and our follies, that we may love and serve Him, according to the spirit of His own pure holiness and wisdom.”

To conclude—We have seen the two very different *views* and *reports*, of two very different classes of people, respecting the eternal things of GOD's kingdom and righteousness, and our own most awful connection with them.

It now only remains for us to choose which of the two views and reports we will believe, and be governed by, the *evil* or the *good*, for one of them we *must* choose, and our eternal happiness or misery *must* be the result of our choice.

Our choice, however, it is well to be noted, will depend altogether on the state of our *love* and *affections*; for if we think of GOD, His kingdom and righteousness, without love and affection, yea, without our *supreme* love and affection, there is then every reason to apprehend and fear we shall be of the

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the unhappy number of those, who bring up and believe an *evil report* of the heavenly land: And in this case, our minds will be occupied continually by distracting *fears, alarms, and doubts*. We shall neither be able to discern our duty, nor have the resolution to perform it; but shall pass our lives in the perpetual misery of murmuring and complaint against the counsels and providence of that MOST HIGH GOD, who, in an infinite mercy, is ever seeking our salvation.

But then on the other hand, if our contemplations on GOD, and on that state of heavenly regenerate life to which He invites us, be *warmed by a devout love*, that is to say, if GOD and the things of His kingdom engage our *chief desires and supreme affections*, there is then every reason to console ourselves with the happy persuasion, that we shall be found in the blessed class of those who bring up a *good report* of the land, and are eager to enter on the possession of it: And in this case we shall be *resolute and determined* in all our purposes respecting GOD and His heavenly kingdom. *Fearfulness and doubt* will give place to a *noble magnanimity* grounded in an *entire confidence*, not in ourselves, but in the mercy, and truth, and power of our HEAVENLY FATHER: We shall be inspired with the wisdom to discover all His counsels, and with the courage to follow and obey them.

Be it then from henceforth our grand concern, to give to GOD and the things of His kingdom our

*first*, our *supreme* love and affections. And since we cannot do this, only so far as we renounce and separate from ourselves the affections of a selfish and worldly love, which would usurp in our minds the place of the divine and heavenly love, be this further the principal study and labour of our lives; be this our *never ceasing prayer* to the FATHER OF MERCIES, that we may be inspired with the grace to bring every lower attachment and desire into subordination to the pure love of GOD and of our neighbour.

Thus shall we be delivered from all the sin and danger of bringing up and believing an *evil report* of the land, and shall escape the terrible condemnation annexed to that report and it's reporters in these awful words, "*As I live saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do unto you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein.*"\*

But we shall not only escape the *condemnation*: We shall receive also the *blessing* annexed to the contrary report and it's reporters in these consolatory words, "*But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went, and his seed shall possess it.*"† AMEN.

\* Numb. xiv. 28, 29. † Numb. xiv. 24.

## SERMON XXIV.

On the Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and in what it's Sin consisted.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we considered the history of the *spies*, who were commanded of GOD to be sent out by Moses, to *search* the land whither they were going up to possess it.

We come now to the consideration of another equally remarkable and instructive history respecting these wonderful travellers in the wilderness; for we read in the Book of Numbers of a formidable rebellion which broke out amongst the people themselves, and which is thus described, "*Now Korah the son of Izhar, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, took men; and they*

*they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown : and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy every one of them, and the LORD is among them : wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD ?”\** We read afterwards, that the disagreement on this occasion was referred to the LORD Himself, who was pleased in a public manner to justify His servants Moses and Aaron, and to inflict the most terrible punishment on the rebellious people, on which occasion it is afterwards written, that *“the ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods : they and all that appertained to them went down into the pit, and the earth closed upon them ; and they perished from among the congregation.”†*

There are two things in this account which deserve our particular attention ; first, The *sin* of the rebellious people here described ; secondly, Their *punishment*.

I shall begin with the consideration of their *sin*, which also may be regarded in a *twofold* view ; first, As a *sin* against Moses and against Aaron ; and secondly, As a *sin* against what was represented by

Moses

\* Numb. xvi. 1, 2, 3. † Numb. xvi. 31, 32, 33.

Moses and Aaron, viz. the Revelation, or Word of GOD.

In respect to the sin here committed, according to the *first* of these views, viz. as a sin against Moses and against Aaron, I wish only to observe, that it was a rebellion against the *lawful authority* which GOD had appointed for spiritual and civil administration, and therefore must needs be highly offensive in the sight of GOD. For according to the present constitution of the world, there must needs be some to *govern*, and others to be *governed*, otherwise the affairs of this world would presently fall into the most miserable confusion and disorder.

Now they who *govern*, and they who are *governed*, it is well to observe, are alike under the control and appointment of the great GOVERNOR OF THE UNIVERSE, agreeable to the Apostle's assertion, "*There is no power but of GOD; the powers that be are ordained of GOD;*"\* for the very permission, on the part of GOD, of the exercise of such powers, is a manifest proof that they are allowed of His providence, and confirms thus the truth of the Apostle's assertion in another place, that "*whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of GOD.*"†

But I trust, beloved, that after so many years of sad experience, which we have lately witnessed in the nations around us, of the dreadful effects of rebellion against *constituted authorities*, there will be no occasion for me to dwell longer on the painful subject.

\* Rom. xiii. 1. † Rom. xiii. 2.

subject. I trust that the terrible sin of civil and spiritual insubordination is now seen and confessed in it's full extent, and that there is no danger of our beholding again any *Dathan* and *Abiram* rising up amongst us to resist the civil and spiritual ordinances of the MOST HIGH. Leaving therefore this part of the subject, I shall proceed to the consideration of the second view of it, by calling your attention to the sin here committed, not as it was a sin against Moses and against Aaron only, but as it was a sin against what was represented by Moses and Aaron, viz. the Revelation and Word of GOD.

That Moses, Aaron, and all the prophets were *representative figures* of the revealed Word of GOD, is manifest from the manner in which that Word is spoken of by our BLESSED LORD Himself, who calls it by the general name of *Moses and the Prophets*. Thus in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham says, "*They have MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, let them hear them;*"\* and again, "*If they hear not MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead;*"† in which passages it is plain to see, that *Moses and the prophets* are terms expressive of that revealed Word of the MOST HIGH, which was communicated by or through them unto mankind; consequently that they are *representative figures* of that Holy Word which they communicated.

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\* Luke xvi. 29. † Luke xvi. 31.



The sin, therefore, committed of old by *Dathan*, *Abiram*, and their company, was not a sin only against the persons and authority of *Moses* and *Aaron*, but it was infinitely more malignant in it's origin, and more tremendous in it's consequences. For it was a sin against the person and authority of GOD Himself, because it was an opposition to, and rejection of, His revealed Word and wisdom, as manifested to His servants *Moses* and *Aaron*. When, therefore, this rebellious people adopted the impious language and said, (addressing themselves to *Moses* and *Aaron*,) "*Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them;*"\* their impiety is to be understood as directed against the revelation of GOD, and calling in question the authority of His Word. They interpret the infinite mercy of that revelation into an act of *tyranny* on the part of the ALMIGHTY, and are presumptuous enough to imagine, that they are *holy every one of them* of themselves, without the law of holiness from GOD; and therefore that the communication of that law from the GREAT CREATOR is to them altogether needless and superfluous.

Beloved, whilst we tremble at the idea of such extreme folly and impiety in the rebellious company, the followers of *Dathan* and *Abiram* of old, let us take good heed unto ourselves, that we be not found *in the tents of these wicked men*, opposing, like them, the revealed Word and will of the MOST HIGH GOD.

\* Numb. xvi. 3.

**GOD.** A rebellion of a similar nature hath of late been excited in our Israel; and the Christian camp, like that in the wilderness of old, hath been at once divided and defiled by the profane cry of an unnatural conspiracy raised against the divine oracles of wisdom and salvation. The man of sin and perdition has had the boldness to speak blasphemous words both against Moses and against GOD, and our ears have been shocked with impieties too horrid to be repeated, yet alas! too common to escape our notice. In short, as *Dathan and Abiram* in old time murmured against Moses and against Aaron, so have their descendants done in our time, whilst they and their deluded followers would exalt their own short-sighted reason above the wisdom of the ETERNAL, and convert the GOD of heaven into a *dumb idol*, by denying Him either the will or the power to *speak* unto His people, and by insisting further that His speech was both unnecessary and unreasonable.

I trust that none of you, beloved, to whom I am now addressing myself, have been infected with the rebellious insanity of which I am now speaking. I trust that we should all of us tremble at the thought of any such *avowed* and *open* hostility against the Word of the MOST HIGH, and that we still retain a secret veneration for our Bibles, as for the book of eternal wisdom and life. So far then all is well with us! But then surely we ought further to consider seriously with ourselves, whether this veneration

veneration which we profess for the Sacred Scriptures, be the *real* veneration of our *hearts* in the sight of GOD, or only a veneration of *habit* and of *custom*; or what is still worse, a *pretended* veneration, for *the sake of saving appearances before men*. For if it be only a veneration of this latter kind, and not the *real veneration of our hearts in the sight of GOD*, how plain is it to see, that notwithstanding all pretences and appearances, we are in heart yet *rebels* against the Divine Word, and joining in confederacy with the rebellious company of old !

But methinks I hear you ask, How shall we know of a certainty of what character our veneration for the Sacred Scriptures is, whether it be a real veneration of our hearts in the sight of GOD, or only the veneration of *habit* and of *custom*, or perhaps the still more reprobable veneration of *pretence* and *appearance* in the sight of men ?

I wish to reply to this question, that nothing surely is so easy to determine, provided we have only a sincere and earnest desire to determine it. Let us but examine how the Word of GOD affects us, *when we are left to ourselves, and to our own private and retired thoughts, when we are alone with GOD*. Do we at such times think devoutly and reverently of that Holy Book which we believe contains the divine will and wisdom of the GREAT CREATOR? Do we find our minds duly impressed with a sense of the inconceivable sanctity, purity, sublimity, and importance of the Divine pages, and,

above all, with a conviction of the continual presence of GOD therein? Do we find a spirit of thankfulness and holy gratitude excited towards our **HEAVENLY FATHER** for thus so wonderfully and perpetually vouchsafing to speak to us, that He may call us to Himself, and fill us with His own life, purity, spirit, and wisdom? Moreover, do we take every opportunity of reading this marvellous book, and thereby of conversing with it's **DIVINE AUTHOR**; and is it become our principal delight to store up it's divine wisdom in our minds, as a means of introducing us into the presence of GOD, of enlightening our understandings with the blessed knowledge of Him and of His kingdom, and thus of forming us more and more in His blessed image, likeness, life, and order?

Behold here the sure and certain method of discovering at once, in *what sort* of veneration we hold the eternal oracles! Behold therefore the sure and certain method of discovering further, whether we rank amongst the profane followers of the rebellious *Dathan* and *Abiram*, or amongst those true Israelites who keep the covenant of their GOD, by adhering faithfully to His servants **Moses** and **Aaron**!

For if from such serious and sincere examination of ourselves in the sight of GOD it appears, that *in our private and retired thoughts* we are not so well affected towards the pages of the eternal truth, as we ought to be: if it appears, I say, that when *left*

*to ourselves, and to indulge freely the inclinations of our own minds,* we feel little or no reverence for our Bibles, little or no consideration of the blessed design and infinite importance of the divine volume, little or no gratitude towards the AUTHOR of it, and, of consequence, seldom or never read it, or, if we do read it, are little or not at all influenced by what we read, as to our lives and conversations—in this case we have, alas! but too much reason to apprehend, that all the veneration we profess for the holy book is merely a veneration of habit or of pretence, for the sake of escaping the censure of men, and that of course, not being the veneration of our hearts and understandings, it is of no avail in the sight of GOD, but stamps us with the polluted name and character of those *sinner*s against their own souls, who formerly withstood Moses and Aaron in the camp of Israel.

But on the other hand, if it appears from the above examination, that when *left to ourselves, and to the indulgence of our own private and retired thoughts,* we think reverently and gratefully of the Word of the MOST HIGH: if it appears also, that we have a *secret internal* delight in reading the Holy Book above every other book, and that we take therefore every favourable opportunity of reading it, for the purpose of growing wise in the wisdom, and happy in the love of our HEAVENLY FATHER and REDEEMER—in this case, we have every reason to rejoice in the comfortable assurance, that our veneration

veneration for our Bibles is *an unfeigned real veneration* of our hearts *in the sight of GOD*, and therefore, that being friends to the eternal truth, and in the way to become it's blessed children, we rank amongst the number of the true Israelites, who are come out from the tents of the ungodly, and continue stedfast in their allegiance to GOD and to His servants, Moses and Aaron.

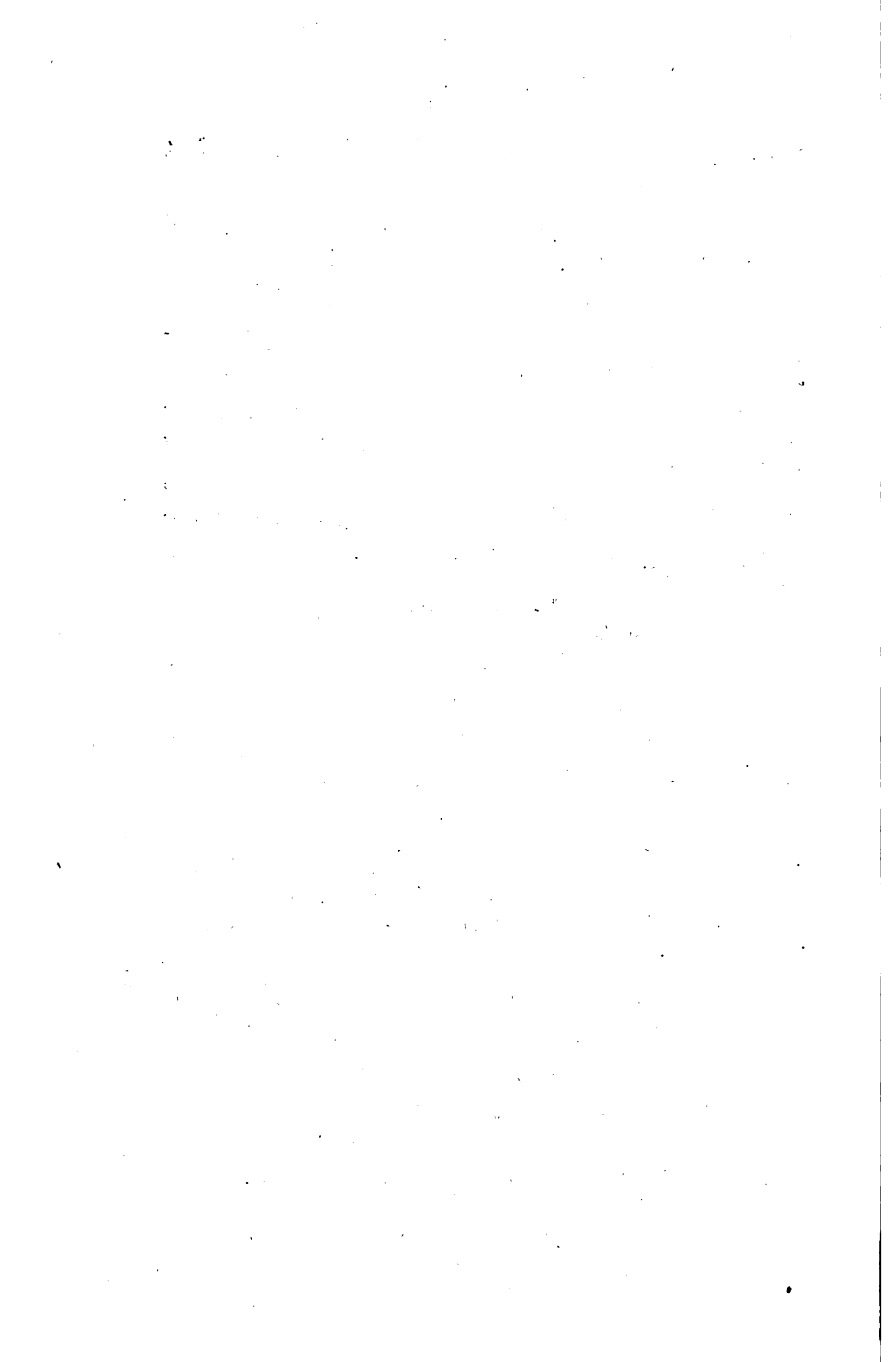
Having thus then considered the *sin* of the rebellious company of old, in the camp of Israel, I should now proceed to the consideration of their *punishment*, but the present time will only permit me to observe, that there is perhaps no sin more heinous in the sight of GOD, or more terrible in it's consequences to ourselves, than the sin above described. For as the **WORD OF GOD** is the only possible means of our communication and conjunction with GOD, so it is a sure unavoidable consequence, that if we slight, or think disrespectfully of that **HOLY WORD**, we slight and think disrespectfully of the GOD who is present in it, and of course separate ourselves from all communication and conjunction with Him in life and blessedness. For GOD and His Word are inseparable, and therefore it is an eternal law, that if we despise the one, we must at the same time despise the other.

Would we then avoid this tremendous sin and it's miserable effects? Let us then in the spirit of a true repentance pray earnestly to our **HEAVENLY FATHER** for the grace to think, at all times, reverently

verently and devoutly of His **HOLY WORD**. Let us consider attentively and seriously in our minds the infinite sanctity, blessedness, and importance of the sacred volume. Let us regard it as the only means or medium of our approach to, and conjunction with **GOD**, or of His approach to, and conjunction with us, and let us use it accordingly.

Thus shall we escape both the sin and the punishment of the rebellious people of old, and our happy lot will be with those holy ones of whom it is written, "*Great peace have they that love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*"\* **AMEN.**

\* Psalm cxix. 164.





## SERMON XXV.

### On the Punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we considered the history of the rebellion excited against Moses and Aaron in the camp of Israel, by Dathan and Abiram, and their followers, as it is recorded in the book of Numbers. We endeavoured to show in what the sin of this rebellion principally consisted, by proving, that it was not a rebellion only against the persons and authority of Moses and Aaron, but against the person and authority of GOD Himself, because it was a rebellion against the revelation or Word of GOD.

Having thus then taken a view of the *sin* of this deluded people in the wilderness, I shall now beg  
leave

leave to call your attention to the *punishment* of that sin, as it stands described in these most awful words, *“ It came to pass as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation.\* ”*

It may possibly be thought by some, that this punishment is out of all proportion to the offence, and that it argues undue severity on the part of GOD to deal so harshly with His creatures on this occasion, without allowing them time to see and repent of the crime which they had committed.

But they who form this judgment of the punishment in question, ought surely to consider, that it is impossible for man to determine what is severe on the part of GOD until he be perfectly well acquainted (which, alas! he never can be) with the measure of human crimes. For until this be known, and known precisely, it will be in vain to reason at all on the subject of the penalties annexed, how far they are proportioned to the crimes or not.

But there is yet a further consideration in regard to the punishment here inflicted, to which I cannot help feeling desirous to call your particular attention, since it supplies us both with a full justification

\* Numb. xiv. 31, 32, 33.

tion of the divine proceeding in regard to the penalty, and also tends to open to our view the brightest display of the mercy and providence of the MOST HIGH in permitting the history to have been written for our instruction.

The consideration I mean is this ; that as the sin committed by the rebellious company against Moses and against Aaron, was a *figure* of a more terrible sin committed against GOD and His revealed Word, according to what has been already shown, so the punishment inflicted in consequence of that sin is a *figure* also of a more terrible punishment which the rebellious people drew down upon themselves by their crimes ; and therefore the ALMIGHTY intended the former punishment to remind us of the latter.

If you ask what punishment can be more terrible than to go down *alive into a pit and to be swallowed up by the earth opening her mouth*, I answer, that to go down into a pit *with our spirits*, is infinitely more terrible than to go down into a pit only *with our bodies* ; and that the ALMIGHTY therefore proved Himself both wise and merciful in *opening the pit's mouth*, and inflicting this *bodily* punishment on the rebellious company of old, that it might be a standing memorial and warning to all future generations of that more dreadful *pit* and more dreadful punishment, to which similar crimes would inevitably expose them in regard to their spirits.

I shall endeavour to elucidate these observations

in my following discourse by showing these two things,

1st. That all opposition to the revealed Word of GOD, whether expressed in the way of doubt or denial, or in the way of disrespect, contempt, and neglect, has this dreadful unavoidable tendency to *open the earth's mouth* and plunge the soul of man into *an infernal pit*.

2nd. That there is no possible method of rising up out of that pit, but by thinking respectfully and devoutly of the Word of GOD, and suffering it's holy wisdom to influence our lives and conversations.

In regard to the first of these positions, it must be very plain to every considerate person, that when the Holy Scriptures make mention of *a pit*, as of *the pit of corruption*,\* or, as it is called in another place, *the pit of destruction*,† they do not mean such a pit as we see here on earth with our bodily eyes, or such as our bodies fall into here below, but they must needs mean a *spiritual pit*, or such a pit as is the object of spiritual sight, and into which the spirit of man unavoidably falls, when he separates himself from GOD, His life, His spirit, and His kingdom.

This state of separation from GOD is called in other passages of the Sacred Writings, *a place of darkness and of the deep*,‡ because the soul, which lives at a distance and separate from GOD, must needs be proportionably separate from His blessed  
light

\* Isaiah xxxviii. 17. † Psalm lv. 23. ‡ Psalm lxxxviii. 6.

*light and life*, and the further it is thus removed from the *height* of divine happiness and purity the more *deeply* it must needs be plunged into the *abyss* of it's own misery and corruption.

And how many, alas! it is to be feared, are sunk deep into this infernal pit, and yet are not aware of their miserable situation! How many would tremble at the thought of *the earth opening her mouth and swallowing up their bodies*, who yet are perfectly at ease and composed under the same dreadful catastrophe, which is every day taking place, as to their better part, their immortal souls, whilst they immerse their affections and thoughts in the cares and pleasures of this world, and thus live in a state of miserable separation from GOD and heaven!

But how plain is it to see, that this separation from GOD and heaven is a mere consequence and effect of their separation from the Word of GOD! for since GOD and His Word are one, and since the Word of GOD is the only possible means or medium of our access to GOD and conjunction with Him, therefore it must follow as an unvoidable consequence, that whosoever separates himself from the Word of GOD, either by thinking or acting in opposition to it's blessed life and spirit, or by any other method of slighting, disregarding, or neglecting it, must needs at the same time, and by the same acts, separate himself from the GOD of that Word, and of course in the same degree plunge himself

himself into the *infernal pit of corruption and destruction!*

Hence then will be manifested the truth of our second position, viz. that there is no possible method of rising out of that pit, but by thinking devoutly and respectfully of the Word of GOD, and by suffering at the same time it's holy wisdom to influence our lives and conversations.

Permit me to call your most awakened attention to this very interesting consideration.

When the patriarch Jacob of old saw in a dream the *mysterious ladder*, which he describes as being "*set in the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven, and the angels of GOD ascending and descending on it,*"\* he was favoured with a figurative view of the Sacred Scriptures or WORD OF GOD which, both in their origin, their descent, and their effect, answer precisely to the description given of this wonderful ladder.

For was this ladder *set in the earth*? Even so is the WORD OF GOD, being brought down here below amongst us men by the greatest of mercies and miracles, whilst in it's letter it assumes as it were an *earthly* body, and being clad in human language, is thus accommodated to the understanding and comprehension of human earthly beings.

Did it's top, again, *reach unto heaven*? The WORD OF GOD in like manner, though in it's *letter* it abides here *on earth* amongst men, yet in it's internal

nal spirit and life it extends to all the societies of the angelic world, as it is written, "*Thy Word abideth for ever in heaven.*"\* Lastly, *Were the angels of GOD seen ascending and descending on it?* How beautiful, how just a description is this of the Word of the MOST HIGH, denoting that the soul of man can only *ascend* unto and have communication with GOD, and the inhabitants of His angelic kingdom, by means of what proceeds from GOD, viz. His eternal Word, and that GOD in like manner, with His angels of life, of blessing, and of salvation, can only *descend* to man by the same sure means, viz. by enlightening man with heavenly knowledge, and quickening him with heavenly life, by and through the reception of the eternal Word!

Behold here then the plain reason why we can never rise up out of the *infernal pit*, only so far as we think reverently and devoutly of the WORD OF GOD, and suffer it at the same time to influence our lives and conversations!

For if the infernal pit be nothing else but the pit of our own corruptions, when we live separated from the blessed knowledge and love of the MOST HIGH; and if the WORD of GOD be the only possible means of delivering us from such separation, by effecting our *ascent* to and communication with the supreme good, and by effecting at the same time the *descent* of that good into our minds; then how manifest is it, that we can never hope to rise

up

\* Psalm cxix. 89.

up out of that pit only so far as the blessed **WORD OF GOD** is the means of our elevation; and that the **WORD OF GOD** can never become the means of our elevation, only so far as it is implanted in our hearts, and becomes operative in our lives by a sincere veneration and right reception of it's heavenly life, spirit, and order!

Hence it was that the holy man of old was enabled to make this happy confession, "*Thou LORD hast brought my soul out of HELL, Thou hast kept my life from them that go down to the PIT;*"\* and in another place, "*He brought me up also out of the HORRIBLE PIT.*"† But what shall we say was the immediate cause or ground of this great deliverance and consequent confession? Let the holy man himself tell us, where he says in another place, "*Thy Word is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver;*"‡ and again, "*Order my steps in Thy Word, and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me;*"§ and again, "*Through Thy commandments I get understanding, therefore I hate all evil ways.*"|| We see then, that the escape of this holy man from the pit of destruction was the sure effect and blessed consequence of his regard for and reception of the **Word**, and **Commandment** of the **LORD** his **GOD**, whereby he was elevated out of and above his own corruptions, and admitted to a blessed communication and conjunction of life,  
of

\* Psalm xxx. 3. † Psalm xl. 2. ‡ Psalm cxix. 72.

§ Psalm cxix. 133. || Psalm cxix. 104.



of wisdom, and of happiness with the **FATHER OF THE UNIVERSE.**

To conclude--Whensoever from henceforth we think of the terrible punishment inflicted of old on the rebellious people in the camp of Israel, let us regard it as a *figure* of that more terrible punishment which we shall unavoidably bring upon ourselves by despising or by neglecting the counsels of the **MOST HIGH GOD** revealed to us in His Holy Word.

When we read, therefore, of *the ground cleaving asunder*, and of *the earth opening her mouth*, to swallow up the deluded followers of Dathan and Abiram, let us think of other *ground*, and of other *earth*, than what is visible to our corporeal eyes: And when we read further of the wicked company *going down alive into the pit*, let us think of *another* pit besides that which destroys the body, and of *another* descent besides the descent of the body. Let us think, I say, of the pit which swallows up the soul in it's miserable separation from **GOD** and His blessed word and kingdom; and let us think of the descent of this our spiritual and immortal part whilst we are foolish enough to immerse our best love and affections in the lower things of time and sense, instead of ascending, as we are mercifully invited by repentance and faith, to the contemplation and enjoyment of the higher, the more blessed things of eternity, in the knowledge and love of  
**GOD**

**GOD** and His everlasting kingdom, revealed and brought near to us by and through His holy Word.

Thus will the history under consideration become to us a lesson of wholesome *reproof, admonition* and *instruction in righteousness*: And thus will it prove itself indeed to come from **GOD**, by effecting that which every part of the Holy Word of **GOD** was intended to effect, viz. by raising us up out of the infernal gulf of our corrupt affections, thoughts, and purposes, whilst we live separate from **GOD** and His Word, and thus by conducting us to that blessed elevation of heart and life, of which the Psalmist speaks, in his holy address to his **MAKER**, where he says, "**HOLD THOU ME UP, and I shall be safe, yea, my delight shall be ever in thy statutes.**" **AMEN.**

\* Psalm cxix. 117.

## SERMON XXVI.

On the Fiery Serpents, with which the Children of Israel were bitten in the Wilderness.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N tracing the journey of the people of GOD out of Egypt through the dreadful wilderness, which was their appointed path to the promised land, we have already taken occasion to note a variety of calamities which tended to stagger their faith in their Divine leader, and a variety of deliverances equally wonderful, which tended to confirm it.

We come now to another occurrence both of danger and of protection, alike striking and edifying as any that precede it, and which is recorded in the following most interesting relation, "*They journeyed*

*from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against GOD, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people; and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”\**

There are two things in the above history which demand our particular attention, first, The calamity which here befel the children of Israel;

Secondly, The remedy or relief provided of GOD for that calamity.

First, then, let us consider the calamity which is here described, as befalling the children of Israel.

In treating of the history of this remarkable people, we have frequently taken occasion to confirm

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\* Numb. xxi. 4 to 10.

the truth of the Apostle's observation, that the things which befel them, "*happened to them for our ensamples,*" or, as it might be more properly expressed, *for our types,* and were accordingly "*written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*"\*

But in no instance is this observation of the Apostle's more clearly conspicuous, or more fully verified, than in that of the calamity under consideration, viz. the plague of the *fiery serpents*, which are described as being sent of GOD amongst the people, to punish them for their disobedience and opposition to His holy will and guidance.

There can be no possible doubt, that such *serpents* were really sent of GOD, and did really and in truth *bite* the bodies of the rebellious people, insomuch that great multitudes *died* in consequence of the dreadful poison communicated from the teeth of the venomous reptiles. If we believe the testimony of Moses, we cannot possibly, I say, deny or dispute these literal historical facts.

But then, if we believe also the testimony of St. Paul, we are compelled by it's authority to believe further, that all these literal historical facts are so many *types* or *figures* of spiritual things relating to GOD, His kingdom, and ourselves, and were accordingly *written for our admonition* and instruction, as containing in them so many holy lessons of the  
most

\* 1 Cor. x. 11.

most important, because the most heavenly and Divine Wisdom.

Thus, if we believe St. Paul, the *fiery serpents* themselves were *figures*, their *bite* also was a *figure*, so likewise was the *poison* communicated by that bite, and in like manner the consequent *death* of the persons who were bitten—all these things, I say, we are forced to acknowledge, were *types* and *figures* of the spiritual things which they severally represented, and which they were intended to convey and make manifest to the latest posterities of mankind.

That the serpent itself is a *figure*, and a *striking figure*, of some spiritual being, principle, and property, is plain from the concurrent testimony of the Word of GOD throughout. Thus when our first parents began to decline from the fear and love of their merciful CREATOR, and to yield to the temptation to eat of the forbidden fruit, they are described as being seduced by a *serpent*,\* inasmuch as this venomous reptile was an exact representative of that grand *infernal seducer* by whom they were deceived, and also of that *sensual and corrupt principle* in themselves, which was disposed to yield to the seducing influence.

Again--when the ALMIGHTY would paint to us, in the most striking and awful colours, the extreme malignity and dangerous tendency of sinful passions

\* Gen iii. 1 to 7.

passions and corrupt affections, He describes them in these figurative terms, "*Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf-adder that stoppeth her ears.*"\* When He would warn us further of the deadly effects of listening to the dictates of our internal corruptions, He expresses Himself in this strong and significative language, "*I will command the serpent, and he shall bite them;*"† and in another place, "*He laid his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.*"‡

Again--Are we to be taught the danger of wandering from the eternal truth of the Word of GOD; to listen to the false persuasions and destructive opinions of ill-designing men, or of ill-designing spirits? Behold the *language of figure*, in which our Divine teacher is pleased to convey the heavenly instruction, "*Out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent;*"§ and in another place, "*They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.*"||

The time would fail me, was I to attempt to collect together all the passages in the Word of GOD, where the term *serpent* is thus figuratively applied to denote those spiritual or mental principles, of which it is so remarkable a representative. Suffice it, therefore, to observe, that JESUS CHRIST Himself,

\* Psalm lviii. 4. † Amos ix. 3. ‡ Amos v. 19.

§ Isaiah xiv. 29. || Isaiah lix. 5

Himself, during His divine ministry here below, was continually adopting the same striking and instructive language, insomuch that He scruples not to call the wicked and unbelieving Jews by the significative appellation of "*serpents, and a generation of vipers*;"\* and when He confers power upon His disciples to overcome their internal corruptions, He expresses Himself with a similar propriety and energy of speech, "*Behold,*" says He, "*I give you power to tread upon SERPENTS and scorpions.*"†

And would we know, beloved, the deep ground and real origin of this significative speech and language of the MOST HIGH GOD? It is manifestly this. All things here below, whether they be *animals, plants*, or of any other description of being, have their birth from the eternal world, and were designed, by an infinite mercy and wisdom, to express some particular principle or property of that world in which they originate and in which they stand. Now the eternal world, we know from the highest authority, is *two-fold*, viz. the *heavenly world*, or the kingdom of GOD, and the *infernal world*, or the kingdom of the wicked one. Accordingly we find from daily experience, that all animals and plants are likewise distinguished into two kinds, agreeable to the worlds in which they originate, viz. the *good* and the *evil*, the *clean* and the *unclean*, the *useful* and the *mischievous*: And to prove to us that this distinction has it's ground in the two kingdoms from

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\* Matt. xii. 34; chap. xxiii. 33. † Luke x. 19.



which it is derived, we find that GOD Himself in His Holy Word is perpetually adopting and confirming it. Thus, when he would describe to us the heavenly graces and blessings which would descend from heaven to man under the Gospel covenant, He calls them by the names of the most beautiful and beneficial *plants and animals*, "*Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree; then shall the lambs feed after their manner. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee.*"\* Again, when He would figure to us the infernal consequences of rejecting or perverting the counsels of evangelical truth, He calls them by the names of plants and animals which have their birth from the infernal kingdom, "*Thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.*"† Thus would the ALMIGHTY instruct us, that He has in mercy appointed all the creatures here below to be speaking figures to us, either of the blessed things of His heavenly kingdom, which He calls upon us to cherish, or of the accursed things of the infernal kingdom, which he warns us to shun. And thus has He proved Himself both wise and merciful, by presenting both kingdoms, with the particulars of each, as in a picture, perpetually before our eyes.

From this view then of the subject under consideration

\* Isaiah lv. 13; chap. v. 17; chap. lx. 7.      † Isaiah xxxiv. 13.

sideration, it will appear evident to every serious attentive reader of the Word of GOD, what was the spiritual instruction designed to be transmitted to us in the history of the *fiery serpents* of old, and their direful effects upon the unhappy people amongst whom they were sent.

It will appear evident, I say, that these serpents were intended to remind us of those more terrible serpents, which will be generated in our own bosoms, and will infallibly bite and poison every faculty of our souls, even unto death, if ever we are thoughtless enough to act the same part of folly and wickedness with the deluded people of old, by *murmuring against Moses and against GOD*; in other words, by opposing in our lives and principles, in our conduct and persuasions, the heavenly wisdom and guidance of the revealed Will of the MOST HIGH, as manifested in His Holy Word of eternal righteousness and truth.

For, in this case, the certain miserable effect and consequence will be, that we shall become merely *natural, sensual, and corporeal* beings, creeping like reptiles, upon the earth, without ever either thinking or desiring to raise our affections to things above: we shall thus obey only the impulse of our bodily passions and senses, those poisonous serpents, which will first bite, and then destroy us: under the infatuation occasioned by that poison, we shall forget our eternal destination, and instead of ascending to the great Author of our being, and uniting ourselves  
with

with His eternal will and wisdom, and becoming thus His pure, and happy, and enlightened children, as He is infinitely desirous to make us, we shall descend down by degrees into the depths and darkness of our own miserable wickedness and folly, to live for ever with those wretched beings who have suffered themselves to be destroyed by the same venomous influences with ourselves.

Having thus then considered the nature of the calamity, which befel the people in the wilderness of old, when GOD sent amongst them *fiery serpents*, I should now proceed to consider it's remarkable remedy; but the present time will only permit me to conclude what has been said with the following observations.

It has been frequently remarked by pious writers, that man is more afraid of *natural* evil, than of *spiritual* evil, in other words, that he is more alarmed at a mischief which may hurt his *body*, than at a mischief which may hurt his *soul*.

The remark appears to be perfectly just, and agreeable to general experience; but, perhaps, in no instance is it more strongly verified, than in that of the calamity which has been the subject of our present attention. For who amongst us would not tremble at the thought of having our bodies bitten by a *natural serpent*, and especially of taking that serpent to our bosoms? And yet how few amongst us feel any apprehension of the sort respecting a *spiritual serpent*, that far more poisonous and de-

structive reptile, which destroys the soul! How many, alas! take this reptile even into their bosoms, without any sense of their danger!

But what eye cannot see the extravagant folly of such a conduct as this? For what eye cannot see, if it was but disposed to see, that the life of the immortal soul is of infinitely greater value than the life of a perishable body? Let us open our eyes then to discover the true worth and estimation of the things which appertain to us, that so we may know both what we ought principally to love, and principally to fear. Let us open our eyes, I say, and keep them open, through the divine grace and mercy, till we have discovered, so as to be influenced by, that eternal wisdom, which said on this occasion, "*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell;*"\* in other words, fear above all things to sin against, and offend, the merciful GOD. AMEN.

\* Matt. x. 28.

## SERMON XXVII.

On the Brazen Serpent set up by Moses, as a  
Remedy against the Bite of the Fiery Ser-  
pents.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we considered the terrible calamity which befel the children of Israel in the wilderness, when GOD sent amongst them *fiery serpents* as a punishment for their murmuring against Him and His servant Moses.

These serpents, it was shewn, were *figures*, and intended to be so, of those still more poisonous and deadly serpents which are generated in the sinful and sensual affections and appetites of man, whensoever he opposes in himself the sacred guidance and government of the Holy Word and Spirit of the **MOST HIGH GOD.**

Having

Having thus then considered the *calamity*, we shall now in the second place, as was proposed, go on to take a view of the extraordinary *remedy* or *relief* pointed out of GOD to His penitent people, as a security against that calamity.

This remedy or relief is thus described in the Sacred History, "*The LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.*"\* And accordingly these words were fulfilled, for we read in the next verse, that "*Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*"†

There is one reflection which must needs strike every thinking considerate mind from reading the above singular relation, and it is this; that into whatsoever depth of sin and of sorrow man may at any time cast himself by his thoughtfulness or his iniquity, the mercy of the MOST HIGH is ever ready and near to stretch out the hand of divine relief and deliverance, so soon as ever the unhappy sufferer is made sensible of his transgression, and in the spirit of a true repentance becomes a convert to his GOD.

This reflection was remarkably verified in the case under consideration, for what could be conceived more tremendous than the situation of the children

\* Numb xxi. 8. † Numb. xxi. 9.

children of Israel in the wilderness, when bitten by the *fiery serpents*? They not only experienced the deadly effects of that bite on their perishing bodies, but they felt a bite of a more terrible kind in their minds and consciences, reproaching them with sin against GOD and their heavenly leader. Yet no sooner do they show signs of contrition, and present their penitent supplications to the FATHER OF MERCIES, than he instantly hears their prayers, and provides and extends the blessed means of relief and healing both to their afflicted minds and distempered bodies.

Whilst we adore that divine compassion and tenderness which thus in all ages hath demonstrated both it's will and ability to succour the afflicted and the penitent, let us be careful not to overlook the further instruction which the love of our HEAVENLY FATHER designed for our improvement, in that memorable and most significant *sign* or *figure*, by which he was pleased to manifest and effect His healing purposes on the present interesting occasion.

And thanks be to His holy name, we are not left to the uncertainty of our own vain conjectures, to discover to us what was His divine and gracious meaning, when He gave the merciful command to His servant Moses, "*Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole:*" For He Himself has kindly condescended, in His manifestation in our flesh, to unfold this great mystery, and to open to our view the

the sublime and heavenly wisdom which it contains. For hear now the words of JESUS CHRIST on this important subject, "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the SON OF MAN be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life.*"\*

In these words it is plainly declared to us by the mouth of the eternal truth, that the *lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness* had reference to the *lifting up of the Son of Man*; in other words, that the *former* lifting up was a figure of the *latter*, and intended to remind us of similar benefits which GOD was graciously pleased by that means to confer upon all his fallen creatures whom the serpent had bitten.

If it be asked, what is to be understood by the *lifting up of the Son of Man*? The Sacred Scriptures give us the plainest and fullest answer to this important question, by informing us, that the blessed JESUS, after accomplishing in His flesh the great work of our redemption by His sufferings and death here upon earth, was finally taken up into heaven and admitted to the fullest and most intimate union with the ETERNAL FATHER, insomuch that the Godhead and manhood thus became one, and by virtue of this union He was enabled to say, "*All power is given unto ME in heaven and in earth.*"†

If it be asked further, what was the *ground and reason* of this *lifting up* of the Son of Man? The

same

\* John iii. 14, 15. † Matt. xxviii. 18.



**sama Sacred Scriptures supply us with the most satisfactory answer to this interesting question also, by teaching us, that since the fall of our first parents, and in consequence of the hereditary corruptions thereby entailed on all the generations of men, we had removed ourselves so far from GOD, and our spiritual faculties were become so gross by sin, that we were no longer able to approach to, or have any conjunction with, the hidden unmanifested Godhead called the FATHER, agreeable to the testimony of JESUS CHRIST where He saith, “*No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*”\*** In condescension therefore to this our fallen state, and in accommodation to the infirmities which it entailed upon us, it pleased our HEAVENLY FATHER, in His eternal mercy, to manifest Himself to us in our flesh, to take upon Him a human body, in which we might see Him as a man, and have communication and conjunction with Him as a man, and after having fought against and subdued our spiritual enemies in that body, and set us an example of the most perfect and heavenly life, it pleased Him further to take that body up into heaven, and glorify it, or make it one with Himself, that so in that exalted, glorified, and Divine body, He might ever be visible and accessible to His creatures, who would not otherwise have been able either to behold or to approach Him, had He remained wrapt up in His primitive unmanifested majesty ; to which purpose

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\* John xiv. 6.

it is written, "*No man hath seen GOD at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him;*"\* and in another place, "*No man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him.*"†

Behold here then the signal blessings announced and made known to all the families of the earth by that most important and significative figure of the *brazen serpent* in the wilderness, *lifted upon a pole*, and also by the effects which were manifested, in consequence of it's exaltation, upon the poisoned and perishing bodies of the children of Israel! Behold, I say, the wonderful accomplishment of the Divine prediction from the beginning of the world, concerning the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, "*It shall braise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel!*"‡

For was that *brazen serpent* commanded of GOD to be *set up*? Even so it was the Divine will of the Eternal, that the *Son of Man*, the blessed JESUS, as to His humanity or flesh, should be exalted to the most intimate union with Himself, and thus *set up*, before the eyes of angels and men, as a *means* or *medium* of their *looking at*, and continually approaching to, the Divine Majesty.

Were the children of Israel again required to *look upon* that *brazen serpent*, whensoever they were bitten by the *fiery serpents*? It is also the will and requirement of the ETERNAL FATHER, that

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\* John i. 18. † Matt. xi. 27. ‡ Gen. iii. 15.

all mankind under every bite of the old serpent, who is ever at work in their corruptions to deceive and destroy them, should henceforth *look up* to the **GLORIFIED BODY OF HIS SON**, this being the appointed, the only means of their communication with the divine source of all spiritual health, life, and preservation, and thus the only possible antidote against the deadly effect of that poison which must otherwise unavoidably destroy them.

Lastly, Do we find it written concerning the figure in the wilderness, that "*If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived?*" Even so, it is still the gracious intention of the **FATHER OF MERCIES** to convert the bite of the serpent into a means of magnifying His own glory and our happiness, by ordaining, that every son of Adam, who in the spirit of a true repentance and humiliation comes unto **JESUS CHRIST** in His exaltation and glory, let the poison of sin have infected Him ever so deeply, shall be restored again to the blessings of complete and perfect spiritual health and *life*, whilst he looks faithfully and patiently upon that **INCARNATE GOD** for relief and remedy. *He shall live*—not what he before called *life*, viz. the life of the perishable joys only of this lower world, or of a body of flesh and blood; but he shall live the heavenly, the blessed, the everlasting life which cometh from the **FATHER OF LIFE**; he shall have communication with the mercy and truth of the Eternal in his heart and under-

standing; he shall love GOD above all things, and his neighbour as himself; he shall through this holy love have dominion over his corruptions, so that in the language of the prophet, he shall "*play on the hole of the asp, and put his hand on the cockatrice's den.*"\* Thus shall every one *live*, and not *die*, of the serpent's bite, who is wise to *look up* to Him who was *lifted up* to *destroy death* and *open the gates of life*.

To conclude—Are there any here present amongst us, who have felt at any time the serpent's bite, and been infected by it's deadly and destructive poison? In other words, Are there any amongst us, in whom infernal passion occasionally prevails over evangelical reason and sober reflection, or, whose better thoughts and desires are sometimes extinguished by the more seducing influences of sensual pleasure and animal gratifications? Whilst we are sensible of the danger to which we are thus exposed, and shed the tear of penitence over the infirmity which *so easily besets* us, let us not despair of our situation, by supposing that we are left to perish without relief, and that no remedy can be found for the removal of the venomous infection communicated by the serpent.

For behold, the ALMIGHTY Himself weeps over our calamity, and Himself gives the merciful, the omnipotent command to provide the blessed means and methods of deliverance! Behold, I say,

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\* Isaiah xi. 8.

at the Divine Word, the Son of the **MOST HIGH GOD** descends upon earth to dwell amongst the children of men, and having manifested amongst them His Divine power over that *accursed serpent* which would both deceive and destroy them, He returns again into His former glory to be one with the **ETERNAL FATHER**, from whom He came forth, and possessing thus *all power in heaven and in earth*, He offers and communicates that power, for the healing of the *serpent's bite*, unto all the bitten, that *look up*, and come unto Him.

Let all such then, as have been made sensible of the deadly bite (and who is there of the sons and daughters of Adam, that has not at times felt it?) let all such amongst us, I say, whilst we mourn over our distress, and repent us of our sin, remember also the Divine command to *look up and live*. Let our mind's eye be directed upwards towards the **GREAT SAVIOUR**, who came down upon the earth, and was *lifted up from the earth* for this very purpose, *to give us power to tread upon serpents and scorpions*, and that if we *had drank any deadly thing, it might not hurt us.*"\*

Then will be fulfilled, in our humble and thankful bosoms, the same mercy and the same miracle too, which is described in the history under consideration, where it is written, "*It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.* For as we *look up* unto the

\* Luke x. 19; Mark xvi. 18.

the BLESSED JESUS, under all the assaults and wounds of our serpentine enemies, we also shall live; because *infernal passion* will then yield to the omnipotent power of *heavenly meekness*; the seductions of *sensual pleasure* will lose their poison, by being brought into subjection to, and communication with, *heavenly delights*; selfish pride will yield to the dominion of heaven-born humility: earthly cunning, subtlety, artifice and deceit will fly and be ashamed at the approach of the pure and blessed spirit of sincerity, simplicity, and uprightness of heart and conversation, from the face of JESUS CHRIST; and thus as the Apostle expresseth it, "*being made free from sin, and become servants to GOD, we shall have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*"\* AMEN.

\* Rom. vi. 22.

## SERMON XXVIII.

### On the History of Balaam.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourse on these words, we considered the history of the *fiery serpents*, by which the people of Israel were bitten in the wilderness, together with the Divine relief extended on the occasion, by setting up the *brazen serpent*.

We proceed now to the consideration of another danger, no less formidable than the foregoing, which presents itself in the way of the heaven-directed travellers; for lo! the king of the country, into the borders of which they are now entering, is alarmed at their approach, and at their numbers. He determines therefore to oppose them, but yet he doth not think it prudent to do so by *force*: he employs therefore other means of security, better suited, as he

he supposes, to answer his purpose; for he sends messengers, with large rewards, to a neighbouring soothsayer, saying, "*Behold there is a people come out of Egypt, behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me.*"\* We read afterwards, that the soothsayer, being directed by the counsel of GOD, refused, at first, to go with the messengers who had been sent to him. Nevertheless, he is afterwards prevailed upon by a second message, and goes; but lo! he is opposed in his way by an angel of the LORD, with a sword drawn in his hand; and the ass, on which he was riding at the time, seeing the angel, turns aside out of the way. The soothsayer, on this occasion, smites the ass, and is miraculously reproved by the LORD's opening the mouth of the dumb beast to speak to, and expostulate with her master. The conclusion of the history is, that after several attempts made by the king of Moab, to engage the soothsayer to curse the children of Israel, his attempts are all turned against himself, inasmuch as GOD converts the intended curse into multiplied blessings on his chosen people.

It may be edifying to make a few remarks on this very extraordinary and interesting history, which, like all others in the Sacred Volume, was doubtless written for our instruction and improvement.

And, first, It may be useful to observe, that the soothsayer,

\* Numb. xxii. 5, 6.



soothsayer, Balaam, who was on this occasion employed by the king of Moab to curse Israel, was himself a very different man from what he *appears* to be. For in his heart he was manifestly an *idolater*, and opposed both the counsel of GOD and the prosperity of His people, as is manifest from what is afterwards written of him: For we learn in a succeeding chapter, that he was found fighting in the army of the Moabites against Israel, and was slain in battle:\* It was also at his instigation, we are informed, that the Moabites, by means of their women, tempted the children of Israel to whoredom and idolatry.† Notwithstanding therefore all that he speaks in favour of GOD and GOD's people; notwithstanding too the *visions* which he had, when, as it is written, "*his eyes were open, and he heard the words of GOD, and saw the vision of the ALMIGHTY;*"‡ notwithstanding, I say, all these favourable appearances of sanctity, and even his being gifted with the *prophetic spirit*, he was still at enmity with GOD, in *the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity*.

By this polluted example, the ALMIGHTY certainly meant at once to warn and to instruct us, by teaching us this edifying lesson, that it is not what we *say*, but what we *do*; it is not our *profession*, but our *practice*; it is not our *knowledge* and our *speculative opinions*, but our *love* and our *charity*, our *purity* and our *humility*, which will render us acceptable

\* Numb. xxxi. 8.

† Numb. xxxi. 15, 16.

‡ Numb. xxiv. 4, 16.

acceptable in His sight, and place us in the honourable rank of His friends and children.

It is possible that the *words of our lips* may be in favour of *GOD*, and yet the *affections of our hearts* may be against *GOD*: it is possible we may even see visions, and have our ears and our eyes both opened to hear and see the words and the visions of the *ALMIGHTY*, and even be enabled to prophesy in His name, as Balaam did, and yet if our hearts be destitute of true humility, charity, and sincerity, we may still be found with the hypocritical soothsayer of old in the army of the *Moabites*, fighting against Israel and the *LORD* of hosts.

But further---when we read in the history under consideration, how the perverse soothsayer was opposed in his way by *an angel of the LORD, with a sword drawn in his hand,\** who was at first invisible, let us collect also from this circumstance the holy and interesting wisdom which it was designed to teach us. Let us learn, I say, that in all our perversenesses, *an angel of the LORD with a sword drawn in his hand*, stands also in the way to oppose us, and whether we see him or not, there he certainly stands, as sure as ever he stood before the wicked Balaam to oppose him. Do we then suffer ourselves at any time to be led astray from *GOD* and heaven by the pride, or vanity, or covetousness, or sensuality of worldly and selfish love? Do we at any time, under the influence of our corruptions, forget

\* Numb. xxii. 22, 23, 24.

forget **GOD**, His kingdom, and our eternal destination? Let us recollect that the angel of the **MOST HIGH** is *drawing his sword* against us, or rather, that our perverseness draws that sword, which will never be sheathed, until we repent us of our iniquity, and in the spirit of evangelical humility and contrition return unto our **GOD**.

But further—We cannot help being struck with another singular event, which befel the deluded prophet on this occasion: for, lo! whilst he is contending with the ass on which he was riding at the time, and which, it seems, *saw the angel of the LORD*,\* whom the blinded rider did not see, the **LORD** opens the mouth of the heretofore dumb creature, to expostulate with her master, and convict him of his error. What a strange and miraculous occurrence was this! Who can read it, without being penetrated at once with a sense of that Divine power which opened the ass's mouth, and also of that Divine mercy, which would thus, as the Apostle expresseth it, "*forbid the madness of the prophet*?"†

But shall we say that this event was *peculiar* to the misguided Balaam, and that the dumb ass never spake either before or since?—If we make speech and language to consist merely in *articulate sounds*, we certainly say right; but if we allow, as we surely ought to allow, that there is another speech and language besides that of *articulate sounds*, agreeable to  
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\* Numb. xxii. 23. † 2 Pet. ii. 16.

the Psalmist's testimony, where, speaking even of things inanimate, he says, that "*their voices are heard amongst them,*"\* then we must be forced to confess that the dumb ass still speaks, and that she still also speaks a merciful language of correction, by still "*reproving the madness of the prophet.*" For she still says, and will continue to say to the end of time, "*The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.*"† Or to express the language in other words, she saith to fallen and sinful man, and all the creatures of GOD say with her, Thou hast departed from the law and order of thy life, which was ordained by thy wise Creator, but we have preserved our's. Thou wast created to love thy GOD above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself, but thou hast not done as thou wast created to do; thou hast inverted the heavenly law by loving thyself and the world better than GOD and thy neighbour: moreover, thou wast created to love another world better than the present, because that world is the place of thy proper destination; and yet, notwithstanding this intention of thy Maker, and thine own best interests too, thou lovest this world, and the things thereof, better than the eternal world: thou art less wise therefore than we the dumb creatures are, who were ordained to be thy servants, for we still love and live as our CREATOR meant us to do, seeing we are made only for this world, and cannot

\* Psalm xix. 3. † Isaiah i. 6.

cannot lift up our thoughts to another, still less to our CREATOR: but thou, on the contrary, art gifted with a Divine ability far above our's, whereby thou canst raise thy contemplations up to the GREAT and HOLY GOD, and His kingdom; yet, thou neglectest to apply and improve this ability, and in so doing thou degradest thyself even below us the beasts that perish.

To the more penetrating mind, which is enlightened to see and to read the instructive *language of figure*, (that appropriate language whereby the speech of GOD is distinguished from all other speech) the history of the speaking ass will not fail to suggest a still deeper and more edifying lesson of admonition and reproof. For the eye of such a mind will not confine it's views to the dumb ass and to the perverse rider, but will extend them to those mental principles intended to be exhibited by this striking and animated picture. In the ass therefore it will no longer behold a mere beast of burden only, such as is presented to the bodily sight, but it will see an image of that inferior faculty of the mind, by which a superior is sustained, and on which it rests, and thus as it were *rides* for convenience and support. In the rider too, it will no longer see a rider according to the common idea suggested by the term, but it will contemplate that higher principle of intellect and persuasion, which, in regard to the lower, doth as it were *ride*, because it guides and stimulates that which carries, conveys, and sustains it, agreeable to  
which

which idea the LORD Himself is described as "*riding upon the heavens.*"\* Thus, when the dumb ass by speaking "*forbad the madness of the prophet,*" the strange and interesting circumstance will suggest to the more intelligent reader the instruction of reproof dictated by an inferior to a superior faculty of the mind: and therefore he will not fail to learn from it this lesson of heavenly and important wisdom, that whensoever the superior faculty, or that which is conversant about the things of GOD and His kingdom, is perverse, wayward, and misguided in it's persuasions and practices, it ought to hearken to, and suffer itself to be directed by a lower faculty, such as is that which is conversant about the things of this world, agreeable to the intimation of JESUS CHRIST, that "*the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light:*"† of consequence the wisdom of the children of this world, which is that of an inferior faculty of the mind, ought to be consulted and acted upon, whensoever the wisdom of the children of light, which is that of a superior faculty, is rendered so perverse and foolish as to stand in need of such counsel.

But lastly—The *conclusion* of this memorable history merits our particular attention and consideration; for, behold, in three successive attempts made by the king of Moab, to draw down a *curse* on the children of Israel, his wicked intention is  
entirely

\* Psalm lxxviii. 4. † Luke xvi. 8.

entirely frustrated, and the *intended curse* is successively converted by the ALMIGHTY into an *increase of blessing* to His elect.

We learn from this circumstance, not only that GOD continually protects His people from all mischief, but also that He makes the intended mischief itself subservient to the purposes of His own mercy, by compelling it to give additional lustre to His glory, whilst it administers to the further purification, perfection, and happiness of His people.

Let us stand still awhile to contemplate, as we ought, this wonderful providence of the MOST HIGH in the permission, the direction, and the control of all evil.

It has been asked, with an air of mixed triumph and ridicule, by a distinguished infidel, "If there be such a being as the devil, and if GOD be omnipotent, why doth He not at once destroy His enemy? Why doth He permit such an adversary any longer to exist and oppose His saving purposes?"

But from the history before us, we are supplied with a full and satisfactory answer to these subtle and ensnaring questions. For we thence learn, that there may be the best and most sufficient reasons why GOD both permits his adversaries to exist, and also suffers them to exert their utmost malice and craft against Himself, His kingdom, and His people. He allows of this *opposition*, because He perpetually turns it against His adversary, and forces it to administer to His own purposes of blessing. His children,

children, it is true, are hereby exposed to trial, to temptation, to trouble, and even to danger, in their sojourning here below: but what then? It is by those very exercises that their faith is confirmed, their love exalted, their affections purified, their victory over evil more complete, their application to their **HEAVENLY FATHER** made more constant, and their conjunction with Him more permanent. **GOD** therefore in mercy ever permits His most favourite children to be tried and afflicted by the adversary, because he sees they will ever be gainers, and not losers, by their temptations and their sufferings. He permits also the adversary to exist and to attempt to curse, but then it is only because from that curse He can bring forth a greater blessing, and because the adversary has no power to do hurt, except with those who are foolish enough to take his part against themselves, by cherishing the mischief to which he tempts them.

To conclude—Whilst we contemplate, in the above history, the enemies and the dangers with which the people of **GOD** in the plains of Moab are beset, let us not neglect to take a view of the people themselves: let us, I say, observe well the order, the peace, the securities of the armies of Israel, even in the midst of their adversaries, whilst they are under the sure guidance and protection of their Divine leader: let us never turn our eyes from the delightful and instructive sight, until we are compelled to exclaim with the Prophet on the occasion,



sion, "*How goodly are thy tents O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel!*"\*

Let us imagine further, that we discern, in this heaven-directed, this heaven-regulated host, a true figure and picture of those eternal principles of righteousness and truth from JESUS CHRIST and His Word, which constitute and form His angelic, His eternal kingdom, and which descending thence into the bosoms of holy men here on earth, restore them to the order of heaven, make them the new-born children of their HEAVENLY FATHER, and place them, notwithstanding the enemies, and the dangers which encompass them, out of the reach of mischief, and under the continual guidance and protection of an omnipotent GOD.

And do we find, from such a view, any desire kindled in ourselves to attain unto a similar state of blessed guidance and protection? Let our first care then be, to cherish in our hearts and lives the pure and heavenly principles in which all sure direction and security from GOD originate. Let us labour after the descent and restoration of the Divine life and order of a pure love and holy wisdom in our own minds, and then our minds will be like the camp of Israel of old, and we may take up our parable and say of our tabernacles as was said of their's, "*Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.*"†  
AMEN.

\* Numb. xxiv. 5. † Numb. xxiii. 23.



## SERMON XXIX.

On the Request of the two Tribes to take up  
their Inheritance on this Side Jordan.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*

**I**N several former discourses on these words, we have attended the children of Israel in their memorable journey out of Egypt through the wilderness, until they come unto the borders of the promised land. We have noted all the most remarkable events which distinguished this journey, and have endeavoured to show, how all and each of them were *figurative* of spiritual things relating to JESUS CHRIST and His eternal kingdom.

We are now surprised with another circumstance of equal wonder, and of equal instruction too, with any which preceded it: For, lo! two of the tribes of Israel, and one half of a third tribe, as they

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approach

approach the promised land, refuse to seek an inheritance there, and ask for themselves an habitation out of the land, on this side the river Jordan, which divided between them and the land of Canaan. Moses, we read, on first hearing this extraordinary request, imputes it to their *cowardice*, and urges it as a proof of their *fear* to fight the LORD's battles. The two tribes, on the other hand, vindicate themselves from this imputation, by declaring to Moses, that they were ready to go and fight the LORD's battles in company with their brethren, and that they did not wish to take possession of *their own* inheritance, until they had first put their brethren in possession of *their's*. Upon this we are informed, that Moses assents to their proposal, and he assures them so in the following words, "*If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him, and the land be subdued before the LORD, then afterwards ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel.*"\*

There are two distinct particulars in the above history, which demand our particular consideration:

First, What was intended to be figured to us by the *request* of the tribes to take up their inheritance on that side of Jordan which was *out of* the promised land ;

Secondly,

\* Numb. xxxii. 20, 21, 22.

Secondly, What was intended further to be figured to us by the *condition* on which this request was granted, viz. that the tribes should “*go armed over Jordan, and fight the LORD's battles.*”

First, then, let us consider what was intended to be figured to us by the *request* of the tribes, to take up their inheritance on that side of Jordan which was *out of* the promised land.

This figure is too bold and striking to be easily mistaken, if we are but in a disposition to apprehend it's meaning; and daily experience, alas! too fully confirms the melancholy truth, that it's meaning is every day realized before our eyes; in other words, that the request of the tribes of old to take up their inheritance *out of* the promised land, is but a sad type of the request of many Christians at this day, in regard to their spiritual inheritance in the kingdom of GOD.

It is never an agreeable task to point out the weaknesses, the failings, the imperfections, and inconsistencies, either of ourselves or of our fellow-creatures; nevertheless, both truth and duty occasionally demand the performance of this task, because both truth and duty require that weaknesses, failings, imperfections, and inconsistencies, should be corrected, and it is impossible they can be corrected, until they are first pointed out and discovered.

The important question therefore on this occasion is, not what is most agreeable and flattering to ourselves

selves to hear and know ; not what will most please and gratify our self-love by presenting to our view the enchanting picture of our own fancied excellencies ; but what is the truth and reality of things and circumstances ; whether, for instance, if truth and reality are to decide, we are not many of us, like the tribes under consideration, *stopping short* of the promised inheritance, and taking up our rest in some defective speculations, persuasions, and practices of *our own, out of* that land of pure evangelical principles and practise to which we are called.

It is not intended, by this suggestion, to bring a charge against any particular description of Christians whatsoever, still less against any individuals of any description, for GOD alone knows the hearts of all, and is therefore alone acquainted with the exact measure and degree of that service which is paid Him by all His children, and how far it falls short, or otherwise, of that service which he has a right to expect from all, as having communicated to all the ability to perform it.

But, howsoever unwilling we may be to accuse any others, we should hardly be able to excuse ourselves on the present occasion, did we not declare it as our undisguised, unreserved opinion, that Christians in general, in their principles, their persuasions and their practices, do not come up to the full standard of that perfection of excellence, which the Gospel presents as the proper measure of their conduct and conversation. When we consider the infinite  
purity

purity of the Divine law; the spotless example of the GREAT REDEEMER; His perpetual calls to all His disciples to follow Him; the privileges, the graces, the virtues, the inestimable blessings held forth to His followers; together with the marked distinction between His children and the children of this world;—when we consider, I say, all these things, and then cast our eyes upon the lives of the generality of Christians, is it the want of charity, or rather is it not the proof of it's abundance, to assert that all Christians are not what all Christians were intended to be; that many *stop short* in their heavenly course, and do not pass over Jordan to enter *fully* into the promised land; that there is a purity and a sublimity, a wisdom and a sanctity, a dignity and yet simplicity of Christian life and conversation, to which all are called, but which few, if any have fully attained; and thus, that the conduct of the Jewish tribes of old is still lamentably repeated at this day, whilst the lives of many Christians still speak the same language, and say, “*Let this land be given unto thy servants for an inheritance, and bring us not over Jordan.*”\*

But shall we then say, that all those Christians are absolutely rejected of GOD, who have not improved His grace to all that extent to which they might have improved it? Shall we say that none are included in the covenant of salvation, but the *spotless* and the *perfect*? Is no allowance to be made

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\* Numb. xxxii. 5,

in this case for *involuntary neglect*, for *constitutional infirmity*, for *defect in education*, for *an accumulation of hereditary corruption*, for *a pressure of lower cares arising from concerns of the body*, all or any of which causes may operate to check the progress towards spiritual perfection? Is no allowance, I say, to be made by, and expected from, the **FATHER OF MERCIES**, under all these several cases?

We have a full and sufficient answer to this interesting question, in the second point presented to our consideration from the history before us, viz. what was intended to be figured to us in the *condition* on which the request of the tribes of old was granted to take up their inheritance on that side of Jordan which was *out of* the promised land.

The condition, we learn, was simply this, that they should go *armed with their brethren over Jordan, and fight the LORD's battles; until the land was subdued before the LORD*, and it was declared that in case they fulfilled this condition, they should be *guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel*.

Let me bespeak, beloved, your most awakened attention to this consideration, because of it's infinite importance to your everlasting happiness, that is to say, to your eternal salvation.

There is every reason to conclude, both from the testimony of the Word of GOD, and from the dictates of sound reason and daily experience, that there ever was, and every will be, an *indefinite variety* amongst the servants and children even of  
**GOD**



GOD Himself. Some will love Him *more*, some will love Him *less*: some will attain to a *high* degree of His blessed knowledge and wisdom, others will be content with an *inferior* degree: some will improve His grace to *the full*, some will improve it *more imperfectly*: there will thus be the *hundred-fold*, the *sixty-fold*, and the *thirty-fold*, of spiritual increase, as it is described in the parable.\* This variety is figured to us in the *twelve* tribes of the children of Israel of old, each tribe having a distinct character from the other, and standing accordingly in a nearer conjunction with GOD, or at a greater distance from Him. The variety itself will necessarily arise out of a variety of *constitution*, of *education*, of *habits*, and of *employments* amongst men, and may ultimately administer to the Divine glory, as the variety of the members and organs of the human body is found to administer to the perfection of the whole; for, as the Apostle testifies, "*The body is not one member, but many.*"†

The question then respecting acceptance with GOD, and eternal salvation, is not how far one Christian *varies from* another, nor yet how far one *excels or falls short of* another in his improvement of the divine grace; for it is possible one may out-run, and another may be out-run, and yet both may be ultimately saved; one may *pass over Jordan*, and the other may be content with an inheritance on *this side*

\* Matt. xiii. 8. † 1 Cor. xii. 14.

*side Jordan, and yet each may be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel.*

The question, therefore, I repeat it, is not concerning our different advancements in the spiritual life, be they *great* or be they *small*; be they *many*, or be they *few*; but it turns on this one single point, *Do we join one with another in fighting the LORD's battles, until the land be subdued before the LORD?* In other words, Do we resolutely and deliberately oppose sin in ourselves, because it is contrary to GOD and His life, and His kingdom? Have we ever in the spirit of a sincere, a vigorous, and persevering repentance, and faith in the GREAT REDEEMER, set up in our hearts this *only* standard of divine fellowship, protection, and security? Let us consider the subject well, that we may make no mistakes in what so infinitely concerns us.

A moment's serious thought will teach us, that sin, that is to say, sinful affection, sinful thought, and sinful act, is what alone separates us from GOD. A moment's serious thought then will convince us further, that we can never hope to have communion or conjunction with GOD; consequently can never hope to attain salvation and eternal life, but so far as such sinful affections, sinful thoughts, and sinful acts are removed, and that they can never be removed until they are first opposed, and combated; but if they are sincerely opposed and combated by us because they are contrary to GOD, then GOD must needs be on our side, and we on the side of  
**GOD,**

**GOD**, for this plainest of all reasons, because no man of himself, without **GOD**, can possibly oppose sin; therefore, whosoever opposeth sin in himself, has an undeniable proof that he acts under the influence of the Divine power and grace, and that consequently **JESUS CHRIST** is with him, who hath said, "*Without me ye can do nothing.*"\*

Here then is the grand inquiry with which we are to begin, if we wish to know whether our lot be amongst the true Israelites, the real children of **GOD**, who "*are guiltless before Him.*" Our bosoms perhaps may not be inflamed with a fire of *divine love* like that of the beloved apostle St. John. We may not be distinguished by the *wisdom* of a Solomon, by the *confidence* of a Peter, or by the *zeal* of a Paul; we may even stop and take up our inheritance on *this side Jordan*; but if we have still within us so much of the Christian temper and spirit as to "*join our brethren in fighting the LORD's battles;*" in other words, if we have so much of the Christian temper and spirit within us, as to hate and oppose sin in ourselves, because it is contrary to **JESUS CHRIST** and His life; if we thus join in fellowship with **GOD**, His angels and His saints, to combat and cast out from our hearts and lives whatsoever is displeasing and offensive to Him, until all "*be subdued before Him;*" let us then rest assured to our unutterable comfort, that whatsoever may be our advancements, our characters, or the measure of our virtue, in other respects, we rank under the banner of the **LORD OF HOSTS**; we have our

sure

\* John xv. 5.

sure lot in His true church and kingdom; and whether our inheritance be on this side Jordan or the other, we shall finally be found of the happy number of those, who are declared "*guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel.*"

To conclude—Let not any thing which has been now said be misinterpreted as having a tendency to abate of that *diligence* which is necessary to "*make out calling and election sure.*" It is rather to be hoped that it's tendency will be the very reverse, by leading us to judge ourselves, and to judge of others, by the only infallible mark of Christian communion, viz. a rooted abhorrence of, and deliberate opposition to, every thing that is sinful, and because it is sinful. For surely where this heavenly, this blessed principle is wanting, there it is in vain to look for the Christian life, temper, and spirit; there whatsoever gaudy trappings, and semblances of virtue may be presented to view, they must needs all be false, visionary, and groundless, having no foundation in JESUS CHRIST and His life. But, where a rooted abhorrence of, and resolute opposition to sin, dwells and operates, in that penitent and pure bosom GOD Himself must needs dwell and operate also; and whatsoever small appearances of spiritual growth and advancement may strike the beholder's eye; whether the inheritance be on this side Jordan or the other; the eternal lot must needs be cast with the true Israelites, because the LORD Himself hath pronounced of all such "*They shall be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel.*"  
AMEN.

## SERMON XXX.

On the Death of Moses and the Appointment  
of Joshua to conduct the People of Israel  
over Jordan.

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DEUT. V. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land  
of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought  
thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a  
stretched-out arm.*

**I**N tracing the journeys of the children of Israel out of Egypt towards the land of Canaan, in several former discourses from the above words, we have at length attended them to the borders of that land, and see them just ready to pass over the river which separates them from it. But, lo! here another extraordinary circumstance befalls them, which demands our attention. For their leader, Moses, under whose guidance and government they had proceeded thus far, is not permitted to conduct them further, but dies in the land of Moab,\* before they had

\* Deut. xxxiv. 5.

had passed over Jordan. Another leader, named Joshua, is immediately appointed of the LORD to succeed him,\* and it is under the command of this new chief that the people enter into, and take possession of the promised land.

To the inattentive and careless reader of the divine pages, I am well aware that the above circumstance will seem of too little importance to require any depth of consideration, and he will see nothing in it but the change of one leader from another. But, beloved, permit me here to repeat what we have had such abundant occasion to observe in the progress of the journeys of the people of GOD, that every most minute event which befel them contains in it some instructive meaning, distinct from what appears in the historical relation, and that this is what discriminates the Book of GOD from every other book. Thus, it has been already shown, that all the parts of the journey under consideration were *types* or *figures* of spiritual things relating to the kingdom or Church of GOD; and thus also the *change of leaders* on the present occasion is to be regarded, not as a mere change of one leader for another, but as a change of what was *figured* and *represented* by those leaders; and therefore if we wish to know the mystery of divine wisdom here intended to be communicated to us for our instruction, we must consider seriously and attentively these two things;

1st.

\* Josh. i. 1, 2.

1st. What was meant to be *figured* and *represented* to us by the leader *Moses* ;

2nd. What was meant to be *figured* and *represented* to us by the leader *Joshua*, in distinction from *Moses*.

When these two things are clearly seen and apprehended, we shall then be enabled also to see and apprehend with equal clearness, and to our unspeakable edification and delight, why *Joshua*, and not *Moses*, was appointed to conduct the children of Israel over Jordan, to take possession of the promised land.

First, Then let us consider what was meant to be *figured* and *represented* to us by the leader *Moses*.

There will be no difficulty attending this consideration, if we only keep in mind what we have frequently had occasion heretofore to observe, viz. that not only *Moses* and *Joshua*, but likewise all the other leaders, prophets and kings of the children of Israel, were *representative figures* of the divine leading and government of the LORD Himself, by means of His revealed Word or wisdom.

But it is to be well noted, that although all the leaders, prophets, and kings of Israel were thus *in general* representative of the divine administration, yet they each of them, in their several offices and characters, exercised a *particular* representation ; in other words, they represented each of them some *particular* and *distinct* office and character in the divine guidance and government. Thus *Moses* represents

represents the LORD under *one* office and character, Aaron under *another*, Joshua under *another*, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, and the rest of the judges and kings, under *others*, and this with an indefinite variety, according to all the possible varieties of the application of the divine mercy and truth to direct, to assist, and to save the fallen human race.

For what enlightened eye cannot see, that the FATHER OF MERCIES is thus continually extending His fatherly providential care over all His children *with an accommodation continually varied* according to their respective states of ignorance, of defilement, of infirmity, and of necessity? Thus at one time and in one state He presents Himself, in and by His Holy Word, more particularly under the character of an *instructor*, to teach and enlighten; at another time and in another state more under the character of a *comforter*, to support and console His people; at other times as a *mighty combatant*, to fight for them against their spiritual enemies; at another as a *mighty conqueror*, to confer on them the rewards of victory; in short, at all times, and to every one, in a way best adapted to the states of each, and to the progress he has made in spiritual growth and advancement.

Here then we may be enabled not only to see the reason why all the prophets, judges, leaders, and kings of the children of Israel were *variously and distinctly* representative of the divine guidance and government,



government, but also what was *particularly* figured and intended to be represented to us by the prophet Moses, who is the more immediate subject of our present consideration.

For Moses (we know) was appointed of GOD to go in unto Pharaoh, to deliver and first make known to him the divine command to let Israel go, and for this purpose to show signs and miracles for his conviction and conversion. He was afterwards required to lead Israel out of Egypt, and conduct them through the wilderness to the promised land: And in the course of this marvellous journey (we read) he received immediately from the MOST HIGH the law of the ten commandments, together with other laws and ordinances for the direction of the children of Israel, over whom he presided.

Hence Moses is a striking *figure* and *representative* of the LORD as a Divine Instructor and Guide of all His children in all ages and places; by and through the wisdom and truth of His revealed will or Word, for it is by this wisdom and truth alone that we are any of us first brought up out of the *bondage of Egypt*, that is to say, of our natural corruptions, to know and to serve the LIVING GOD. It is again by this wisdom and truth alone instructing us, that we are enabled to direct our course towards the promised land, and to sojourn through the wilderness: And it is lastly by this same wisdom and truth alone, that we attain a clear understanding of the divine will, and become

come enlightened in all those things which concern our eternal well-being in the kingdom of GOD.

Having thus then considered what was intended to be particularly *figured* and *represented* to us by the prophet Moses, let us now proceed to consider, as was secondly proposed, what was further intended to be *figured* and *represented* by the leader Joshua, in distinction from Moses.

This will appear very plain from attending to the history of Joshua, as it is recorded in the sacred oracles; for from this history it is manifest that the proper and distinguishing character of Joshua was that of a *mighty warrior*, and therefore we find that in the battle against Amalek he was appointed to the command of the armies of Israel, whilst Moses and Aaron sat on a hill retired from the combat.\* And again, when the angel of the LORD afterwards appeared to him in the land of Canaan, it was *with a sword drawn in his hand*,† to mark more emphatically the *warlike* duties to which he was called. In short, the whole of the life of Joshua, as handed down to us in the sacred records, was a life of arms, of combat, and of victory.

Hence then there can be no difficulty in apprehending what was intended to be *figured* and *represented* to us under the person and character of this illustrious chief: it must, I say, needs be easily seen by the enlightened eye of wisdom, that as Moses was a *type* and *figure* of the great ALMIGH-

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\* Exod. xvii. 9. † Joshua v. 13.

**TY JEHOVAH**, *instructing* and *guiding* His people by the light and truth of His Holy Word, so Joshua was a type and figure of the same **OMNIPOTENT LORD**, but under a *varied* and *distinct* character, viz. not as *instructing*, but as *combating*, not as *enlightening* His people only by His eternal truth, but as enabling them thereby to *fight against* and *overcome* all their spiritual enemies, and thus conducting them through *conquest to victory*, out of the wilderness into Canaan.

Let us stand still a moment to contemplate the deep ground and high reasonableness of this representation, that so we may attain all that heavenly and sublime instruction which it was designed to convey unto us.

It is plain from the revealed Word of **GOD**, that the light of the eternal truth, communicated by and through that most Holy Book, is the only possible means or medium of our salvation, because it is the only possible means or medium of our attaining to any knowledge of **GOD** and of His kingdom; and until we attain to the knowledge of **GOD** and of His kingdom, it is impossible we can *love* them, for we cannot love what we do not know; and if we do not love **GOD** and His kingdom, we cannot have conjunction with them, for all conjunction is the effect of love alone, and of course we must perish everlastingly, because this is the very nature and essence of eternal destruction, not to have living conjunction with **GOD**.

It is alike plain, that the Word of GOD, in producing it's intended saving effects, must needs operate in a *two-fold* manner on our minds, viz. *first* in the way of *instruction*, to teach us what is good and what is evil, what we ought, therefore, to choose and love, and what we ought to refuse and abhor; and *secondly* in the way of *combat*, by leading us to *oppose* in ourselves what we know to be evil, that is to say, contrary to GOD; for if we are content with merely *knowing* what is evil, without *opposing* it—if we think it enough to be *instructed*, without going on to *subdue the enemies* which instruction points out to us, how plain is it to see, that our knowledge and instruction in such case, so far from being beneficial to us, will but increase our condemnation, agreeable to the words of JESUS CHRIST, “*If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.*”\*

It is for this reason and from this ground, that the Church of JESUS CHRIST here on earth is called the *Church militant*, because it is supposed to *wage perpetual war* against it's spiritual adversaries: and accordingly the introduction into this Church at baptism is expressed in these remarkable words, “*We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and MAN-  
FULLY*”

\* John ix. 41.

**FULLY TO FIGHT UNDER HIS BANNER AGAINST SIN, THE WORLD, AND THE DEVIL, &c.\*** For the same reason, and agreeable to the same idea, JESUS CHRIST saith to His disciples, "*Think not that I am come to send peace upon earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword,*"† manifestly denoting the *spiritual combats* which His heavenly doctrines would excite in the minds of His true followers.

Here then the mystery is fully unravelled, and we are enabled to see clearly not only what is *distinctly figured* and *represented* to us by Moses and Joshua, but also why Joshua, and not Moses, was appointed to put the people of GOD in possession of the promised land. For the promised land, it is plain, according to it's spiritual sense and signification, is conjunction with GOD, by and in the heaven-born spirit of His own pure love and wisdom; and to take possession of this land is to attain to such blessed conjunction. But who cannot discern that this blessed conjunction is not attainable by knowledge *alone*, but by a *life according to knowledge*, that is to say, by *opposing* in ourselves those corruptions which our knowledge teaches us to be contrary to GOD? For if we *know* what sin is, and yet never *enter into combat against it*, in this case sin remains unremoved in us, notwithstanding our knowledge, and of course forbids our entrance into the promised land.

And

\* See the office of baptism. † Matt. x. 34.

And therefore it is an eternal law, that not Moses, but Joshua; not *knowledge*, but *obedience to knowledge*; not *instruction*, but the *spiritual combats and victories* to which instruction leads, can alone put us in full possession of the heavenly inheritance.

To conclude—Let us learn from what hath been said, to distinguish well in ourselves between the two heavenly principles and powers represented and figured to us by the Israelitish leaders of old, whose names were Moses and Joshua. Let us be careful, I say, to discriminate well between *the truth which enlightens*, and *the truth which fights*; between *the instruction* which makes sin manifest, and the *combat* by which sin is destroyed: and let us never forget, that the former only *conducts us to the borders* of the promised land; but to *enter in and take possession*, we must apply the latter to the removal of our defilements, by waging a successful war against them. We must thus exchange the *rod of Moses* for the *sword of Joshua*, and use that sword valiantly as he did. We must spare no adversary, we must make no compromise with any darling lust, any favourite affection, any besetting sin, which would oppose our taking full possession of the heavenly Canaan. We must not be content with quitting Egypt and journeying through the wilderness, but we must also pass over Jordan, and expel the wicked inhabitants out of the land. Or to speak without a figure—we must not think it enough to have our *understandings enlightened*, but we must have

our

our *wills purified*; we must not be satisfied with *knowing GOD* and our duty, but we must also *love* them, and for this purpose must *combat* what is contrary to them, because otherwise we never can love them.

Then shall we be taught experimentally in ourselves what was the deep ground and reasonableness of that *change of the leaders of Israel*, of which we have been speaking; for then, whilst we adore that Divine mercy and truth, which, by instructing us in the knowledge of our duty, sends the prophet Moses continually to conduct us out of Egypt to the borders of the promised land, we shall bow down with equal adoration under the acknowledgment, that when the time comes for our passing over Jordan, and entering into the heavenly Canaan, then the *instruction of knowledge* is converted into *the power of combat*, and what before had *opened our eyes to see* our enemies, now *strengthens our hands to fight and to conquer*; and thus are fulfilled still, in the bosoms of the faithful and the penitent, the words of the MOST HIGH, where it is written, *The LORD thy GOD, He will go over before thee, and He will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them; and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.*\*\* AMEN.

\* Deut. xxxi. 3.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial matters. The text suggests that organizations should implement robust systems to track and report on their operations, ensuring that all data is up-to-date and easily accessible.

2. The second section focuses on the role of leadership in fostering a culture of integrity and ethical behavior. It argues that leaders must set a clear example and communicate the organization's values consistently. By doing so, they can encourage employees to act with honesty and fairness, which ultimately leads to better performance and long-term success. The text also highlights the importance of regular communication and feedback loops to address any issues that may arise.

3. The third part of the document addresses the challenges of managing a diverse workforce. It notes that organizations must take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of their employees. This requires a flexible and inclusive approach to management, where everyone's contributions are valued and leveraged. The text provides several strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion, such as providing training and development opportunities, and creating a supportive work environment.

4. The final section discusses the importance of continuous learning and improvement. It states that in a rapidly changing world, organizations must stay ahead of the curve by constantly updating their skills and knowledge. This can be achieved through various means, including formal education, on-the-job training, and self-directed learning. The text encourages organizations to invest in their employees' growth and development, as this will lead to a more skilled and adaptable workforce.



## SERMON XXXI.

On the Passage of the Children of Israel  
over Jordan, and their Entrance into the  
promised Land.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land  
of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought  
thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a  
stretched-out arm.*

**I**N several former discourses on these words, we have attended the children of Israel in their miraculous journey out of Egypt through the wilderness, until they come to the borders of the promised land.

And now behold! having finished their long sojourning of forty years in a barren inhospitable desert, the people of GOD prepare to take possession of the inheritance which had been the fond object of their expectations, and was now the near reward of their toils. Nothing separates them from this blessed land but a small river, the river of Jordan,

dan, and lo! as the ark of GOD approaches this river, the stream is suddenly divided by the divine command, and the people pass over on dry ground, for thus JEHOVAH had spoken, "*It shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the LORD of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand upon an heap.*"\*

It is impossible to contemplate the scene here presented to our view, without being struck with astonishment at the mercy and the miracle by which it is distinguished. To see the waters of a river divided asunder, and the ordinary operation of the laws of nature suspended by a sudden check given to the flowing stream—to behold a numerous army thus walking over on dry ground, whilst the waves are a wall to them on the right hand and on the left—to reflect, further, that this army had been journeying forty years in a barren wilderness, and was now, by this extraordinary interposition of the Divine Power and Providence, to be introduced into the happy land, which had been so long the object of their hopes—what can be conceived more grand and edifying? what more worthy of divine wisdom to contrive, or of human wisdom to contemplate, than such a scene as this?

Let us then open our eyes to view it *distinctly*,

so as to discern all the *parts* and *particulars* of which it is composed. Let us view it too as to it's *inside*, as well as to it's *outside*, from a full conviction, that as every circumstance recorded in the Word of GOD is more glorious *within* than it is *without*, so it is also in regard to the miraculous transaction here presented to our consideration. It is magnificent indeed in it's *external form* and *visible appearance*, but it is infinitely more so in it's *internal signification* and *meaning*, and in all those *unseen glories*, which constitute the *substance*, of which the visible appearance is but the *shadow*.

And what eye, if it be so disposed, cannot look thus into the *interior* of this astonishing history, and behold it's *hidden* magnificence and grandeur? For what well-disposed eye cannot see, that this history is a *figure*, in other words, that the passage of the children of Israel over the divided waters of Jordan, to enter into the promised land, *involves in it*, and therefore is a *representative type* of the passage of the faithful (the true children of GOD in all ages and places) out of the regions of time, of sorrow, of trial and of danger, in which they have been long sojourning here below, to enter upon and take possession of the blessed regions of eternity, where "*there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.*"\*

It is not then a mere *dead history* which is the subject of our present attention, for if we suppose

so, we shall deprive it of all its *life* and *glory*, and ourselves too of the life and glory which it was intended to communicate. But the facts here presented to our view are *living* facts; in other words, they have a *life* and *meaning* from GOD in them, because they involve in them the greatest realities of the divine mercy and providence, which are every day transacting, in relation to the eternal things of His kingdom and our most awful and important connection with them.

For do the waters of Jordan divide asunder at the approach of the consecrated ark, and of the people who followed it's heavenly guidance? Even so at this day, the waters of every spiritual evil, trial, trouble and difficulty are removed, through a divine power, before the children of the MOST HIGH, the faithful and the penitent of all descriptions and in all places, so that they pass directly through them to the possession of the promised inheritance.

Do the people of Israel again at length reach the end of their journey, and find all the promises of GOD realized in regard to the land which had been appointed for them? Do they now behold the prepared rest, and receive the recompense of the labours and sorrows which had conducted them to the possession of it? Even so it is at this day in respect to the faithful followers of the GREAT REDEEMER: For what we call *Death* is to them an Introduction to true *Life*; and if we could open our eyes

eyes to behold what is transacting beyond the grave, we should there see daily and hourly fulfilled, in their true magnificence, all those grand *realities* of which the events which befel the children of Israel are but *figures*; for we should there see the penitent and the believing entering continually into possession of the heavenly Canaan; and we should be partakers of their joys, whilst we behold them putting off all their sorrows and their doubts, and in the place of misery and uncertainty receiving the full assurance of hope, the blessed accomplishment of all the promises of GOD, infinitely surpassing every thing they could have conceived or thought of, because "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him.*"\*

But there is yet a further meaning, and this also a most important one, involved in the history under consideration.

For to enter into the heavenly Canaan, that is to say, into heaven, implies that we become *heavenly-minded*, agreeable to the words of JESUS CHRIST, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD;*" and again, "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD.*"†

The ground and reasonableness of this qualification to enter into heaven is manifestly this, that heaven is a state of pure and holy love, which is

love

\* 1 Corinth xi. 9. † John iii. 3, 5.

love towards GOD, and love one towards another, exalted to the ascendancy over every other and inferior love, and therefore it is impossible for any one to enter into the blessed kingdom, until he has attained, through the gospel spirit, to this happy change in the state of his love and affections.

For by nature, it is, alas! too plain, we none of us love GOD and one another, as GOD intended us to do, but are miserably defiled with the inordinate love of ourselves more than of GOD, and of this world more than of our neighbour, and therefore it is absolutely necessary that we pass out of this state of mere *natural* love into which we are born, and ascend unto a state of spiritual love by being re-born, before we can hope for any admission into that heavenly world and kingdom, into which no unclean thing can enter.

Behold here then another most magnificent object involved in the passage over Jordan, and the entrance into the promised land, by the Israelitish army of old!

These distinguished events are *figures*, not only of the admission of the faithful hereafter into the eternal kingdom of the MOST HIGH, but also of their admission, or ascension, to those pure, evangelical, spiritual principles of life and love, during their abode in this world, which are to be their qualification for a blessed eternity, by leading them to conjunction with the blessed and eternal GOD.

I am well aware that all this will seem strange  
and

and inconceivable to the thoughtless and inconsiderate, who will therefore wonder what possible connexion there can be between the journey of a people from one country to another, and the progress of the human soul in heavenly wisdom and life.

But, beloved, let us leave the thoughtless and inconsiderate to their own reflections, and let us remember that if they are disposed to put out *their* eyes, it is no reason at all why we should put out *our's*. If we take our rule of judgment from the thoughtless and inconsiderate, we may soon find ourselves destitute of every thing that is most valuable, both respecting the knowledge of GOD and of ourselves.

Be it our wisdom then to separate ourselves as far as possible from such unsafe directors, by consulting the higher and surer guidance of the "*wisdom which is from above.*" Be it our wisdom, I say, in the spirit of a vigorous repentance, and a steady conversion to JESUS CHRIST, to depart from our sins, that we may attain to the inconceivable bliss of knowing, and loving, and serving the LIVING LORD. Be it our wisdom to ascend out of the dark and polluted regions of ignorance, of infidelity, of transgression, and defilement, and to direct our heavenly course upwards towards the bright, the blessed mansions of the knowledge and love of the SUPREME GOOD, in it's adorable fountain JESUS CHRIST.

Then, if we persevere in the happy progress,  
shall

shall we see clearly, and by a light infinitely surpassing that of the mid-day sun, how the journey of the children of Israel out of Egypt, in it's every step and stage, was an exact type and figure of this our spiritual advancement from the kingdom of darkness and misery, to the opposite kingdom of light and joy. For then we shall discern, what the thoughtless and inconsiderate alas! never can discern, that the *mind* of man, as well as the *earth* on which he lives, is distinguished into *regions* lower and higher, answering to *the land of Egypt*, and *the land of Canaan* in the historical figure. We shall discern further, that so long as we continue the slaves of our corruptions, we remain miserable captives *in the lower regions of Egypt and in the house of bondage*, because there is nothing *so low* and *degrading* as sin; there is no bondage *so debasing*, there is no chain so heavy and so galling, as that which binds us to the yoke of our passions and our vices. But no sooner do we begin, through the saving grace and power of the MOST HIGH, to break that yoke from off our necks, that we may be at liberty to know and serve the LIVING GOD, than we instantly quit the lower country of our captivity, and commence our spiritual journey towards the higher land of heaven-born freedom and enjoyment. In this case, indeed, we must needs *pass through a wilderness*, because no one can possibly put off his natural defilements without *trial* and *trouble*, of which the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan



Canaan was a representative figure. But the wilderness, we have seen, has it's termination, and this termination is *the river of Jordan* which introduces directly to the promised land. Even so, if we are wise to persevere in our heavenly course, we shall find to our unspeakable joy, that all our spiritual trials and troubles have their termination also, and that this termination is the *river of spiritual Jordan*: And when we come to the banks of this mysterious river, we shall find to our wonder, and to our joy, as the children of Israel found to their's, that at the Divine command it's waters will be divided, to introduce us to the complete knowledge, love, and enjoyment of that GOD to whose guidance and government we have submitted.

To conclude—Let us learn from what hath been said, that the whole journey of the children of Israel, from their departure out of Egypt, to their entrance into the land of Canaan, is an exact transcript of that far more important journey, by which the faithful and the penitent are led out of the regions of sin and vanity, to recover their proper, their lost state of innocence and bliss in the knowledge and the love of GOD. But let us remember, at the same time, that we can never learn this perfectly, so as to believe it, till we set out on that journey ourselves. For whilst we continue to hug the chains of Egypt, by cherishing our corruptions, in this case, though we were told a thousand times by an angel from heaven, what Egypt was meant to represent

sent to us, we should give no manner of credit at all to his information.

Would we then really know, so as fully to believe, what the history of the journeys of the people of GOD of old was intended to figure to us? Let us prepare ourselves to set out on the same journey, and diligently to pursue it. Let us beg of GOD the grace to forsake our corruptions. Let us proceed to oppose in ourselves whatsoever is contrary to His pure love and wisdom. Let us persevere in the blessed course, notwithstanding the trials and difficulties to which it may expose us. We shall then soon discover what *Egypt, the wilderness, and the land of Canaan* really are and mean, because we shall find fulfilled in ourselves the blessed words, "*Thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy GOD brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm.*"  
**AMEN.**

## SERMON XXXII.

On taking Possession of the promised Land,  
with a Consideration of the Reasons why  
the wicked Inhabitants were expelled by  
little and little, and why some were left to  
prove Israel.

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DEUT. v. 15.

*And remember that thou wast a servant in the land  
of Egypt, and that the LORD thy GOD brought  
thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a  
stretched-out arm.*

**I**N our last discourses on these words, we considered the introduction of the children of Israel into the promised land, so far as it is figured by the passage over Jordan, and endeavoured to point out the variety of spiritual instruction presented to our view by this wonderful figure.

There remains now only one further consideration respecting the journey of this extraordinary people,

and with it we shall conclude the mysterious history.

The consideration I mean, is their *taking possession* of the land to which they had been *introduced*, and this possession, we find, is attained and secured by combats against the idolatrous inhabitants who are found there, and by successive victories over them.

Respecting these combats and victories, there are two points which deserve especial attention: the *first* is, that these inhabitants were not to be overcome *at once*, but were to be expelled, as it is expressed in the history, "*by little and little.*"\* The *second* is, that some of the inhabitants were not to be expelled at all, but were to be *left*, as it is described in the history, "*to prove Israel, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.*"†

Let us begin with the *first* of these considerations, viz. that the inhabitants of the land were not to be overcome *at once*, but were to be expelled, as it is expressed in the history, by "*little and little.*"

The instruction to be derived from this figure is so plain and easy of apprehension, that it is impossible for any sincere and well-disposed mind to mistake or misconceive its meaning. It is impossible, I say, not to see, if we be disposed to see, that the ALMIGHTY intended by this figure to instruct us, that

\* Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. Deut. vii. 22. † Judges ii. 21; iii. 1, 4.

that in our combats against our spiritual adversaries, the powers of sin and darkness, we are not to expect a *sudden* victory, in other words, we are not to expect that the enemy will be subdued by a *single* blow, but on the contrary, that his subjugation will require *repeated* efforts, before the victory can be complete.

The ground and reasonableness of this *delay*, or *slowness of operation* on the part of GOD in conducting us to spiritual conquests, originates in *two* distinct considerations, *first*, in the *numbers* of the enemy to be subdued, which of course will give birth to *multiplied* assaults; *secondly*, in the *natural pride* of our own hearts, which might be nourished and increased by a *hasty* victory.

And first,—It originates in the *numbers* of the enemy to be subdued; for, as we learn from the testimony of the sacred Scriptures, when JESUS CHRIST asked the devil, *What is thy name?* He answered, saying, *My name is Legion, for we are many.\** *Legion* then being the name of our spiritual adversaries, it is reasonable to conceive that his assaults will be in agreement with his name, and will accordingly be *many* and *various*.

We are not, therefore, to suppose, because we have been successful in combating one sin, and casting out one devil, that we have on that account gained the victory over *all*; for it is possible we may conquer *pride*, and yet be overcome by *covetousness*,

\* Mark v. 9.

*ousness*, or we may put down *covetousness*, and yet be the slaves of *sensuality*. Thus we may bruise a *single* limb of the serpent, and yet leave him in possession of all his vigour. We may slay the *Canaanites*, and yet fall into the hands of the *Perizzites*; or we may escape the *Perizzites*, and still be in danger from the *Hittites*, the *Hivites*, the *Amorites*, the *Girgashites*, and the *Jebushites*. This *variety*, therefore, of hostile nations is recorded, in order to teach us, that the name of our enemy is *Legion* and that they are *many*, and thus to enable us to see that he can only be expelled by *little* and *little*, therefore, that we ought to be prepared for *multiplied* attacks, and to be content also to gain a *gradual* victory.

A *second* cause of this delay is grounded in our own natural *pride*, which might be nourished and increased by a *sudden* victory, on which account the LORD assigns this memorable reason for the apparent tardiness of His conquests, "*Lest*," says He, "*the beasts of the field increase upon thee.*"\* It is possible then, and it is also probable, that *sudden* success, even against our spiritual adversaries, might be dangerous, by cherishing *presumption* and the *pride of conquest*. Thus we might indeed trample upon one foe, but then we should be the slaves of another, still more formidable. We might bruise the serpent's *tail*, but his *head* would be as much alive as ever. Whereas, the *slowness* and *delay* of conquest,

\* Deut. vii. 22.

conquest, by exercising our faith and patience, may tend to increase our humility and dependence on Divine aid, without which heavenly virtues, even victory itself would be no victory, because it would only tend to puff us up more with the vanity and fond conceit of our own excellencies and powers, and would thus set us at a greater distance from the presence and blessing of the GOD of heaven, who is never so near and dear to us as in our states of humiliation and self-abasement.

When the ALMIGHTY then declared to Moses of old the wisdom of His Divine purpose to deliver Israël *by little and little*, He meant also to hand down a lesson of instruction to the remotest ages of the world, by which His children might be taught to proceed *deliberately* and *gradually* in their spiritual conquests. He meant thus to check our natural impetuositities, and by the wholesome discipline of patience and long-suffering, to wean us from all fond conceit of our own virtues, as if they were our own and self-derived, instead of being acknowledged to be perpetual gifts from above. He designed further to instruct us, that our enemy is not *one*, but *many*, and that therefore, we ought to be prepared for *multiplied* assaults. But then He designed to instruct us still further, that in proportion to the *number* of our assaults will be the *extent* of our victories, provided we continue faithful, and that, therefore, to murmur at the continuation of combat is to murmur because we are called to *multiplied* triumphs,

triumphs, and to carry the banner of the ALMIGHTY into the *remotest* regions of the enemy's kingdom.

But secondly—It is another no less important and edifying law of the Divine Providence operative on this occasion, that some of the wicked inhabitants of the land of Canaan were not to be expelled at all, but were to be *left*, as it is described in the history, “*to prove Israel, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.*”

The design of this law is equally wise and equally plain to be apprehended with that which we have been considering, manifestly teaching us this weighty lesson of spiritual life and spiritual combat, viz. that during our abode here on earth, we are never to expect to be totally exempt from *trials* and *temptations* excited by our spiritual enemies the powers of darkness.

For when it is said in the history, that some of the wicked nations were to be left *to prove* Israel, the expression *to prove* plainly denotes a state of *trial* or *temptation*, since trials or temptations are in all cases *proofs*, and perhaps the best *proofs* of all others, how far we are faithful or unfaithful to the spirit and commandments of the LORD our GOD.

Let it not, however, be supposed that the children of Israel were unfaithful to their GOD, because

cause



cause some nations were thus left to *prove* them ; neither let it be supposed that we ourselves are unfaithful to our GOD, merely because we are still exposed to *trials and temptations*.

For to *commit sin* is one thing, and to *be tempted to sin*, is another. JESUS CHRIST Himself, we know, was *tempted to sin*, but we know at the same time, that He did not *commit sin*. In like manner, all His most faithful followers, in every step and stage of their spiritual progress, are still exposed to spiritual trial and exercises, but then, so far from being defiled by these *proofs* of their faith and patience, they are rather purified ; so far from being tainted with *sin*, they obtain a fuller victory over all the power of the enemy.

Behold, here, then the mercy and the wisdom unitedly manifested in the divine law under consideration ! Behold, I say, how the ALMIGHTY, in leaving some nations of old to *prove* His chosen people, meant to instruct us in this most interesting and consolatory truth, that whensoever we set ourselves in good earnest to oppose our spiritual enemies the powers of darkness, by opposing in ourselves the ascendancy of our corruptions, and compelling passion to submit to the sovereignty of the Divine spirit and life, in this case our very *foes* will become our *friends*, by administering to our purification, and helping forward our spiritual advancement. The enemy, therefore, it is plain, has no power at all to hurt us, but what we impart to him  
by

by cherishing his purposes. He breaks to pieces, indeed, the bones of the wicked, because they are His willing captives, and never make any effort to loosen His chains. But the moment we are wise, by evangelical faith and repentance, to set our faces against our spiritual adversaries, and to control their dominion, from that moment the power of our adversaries, which was heretofore *against* us, is now turned *in our favour*. They who before allured us to sin, and threatened our destruction, now, by a most miraculous and providential disposal, are converted into instruments of *proving* our virtue, and thereby of purifying our love, and promoting our salvation. Thus the ALMIGHTY forces all things, and all powers, to administer to His own purposes of blessing in regard to His children who love Him, and at the very time that He gives the enemy permission to assault them, and to continue the assault even to the end of their lives here on earth, He is only providing the more effectually for their eternal happiness, by strengthening, extending, and perfecting their virtue.

To conclude—let us learn from these two remarkable laws relative to the expulsion of the wicked inhabitants from the land of Canaan, neither to expect a *sudden* victory over all our spiritual enemies, nor yet such a victory as will leave us entirely out of the reach of assault and temptation. Let us therefore be content to be advancing *by degrees* towards the final and complete conquest, and let us not murmur

mur and repine, but rather rejoice, if we find our faith and patience still put to the proof by those adversaries, who are *left* in the land, by the Divine permission, for this very purpose to *try* our principles, and in trying to purify, confirm, and fix them.

And let us learn, from the whole of that wonderful history, the consideration of which we have now brought to a conclusion, how replete every part of the Word of GOD is with His own Divine wisdom, mercy, and life.

In reading, therefore, the Heavenly Book, let us regard the letter merely as a cabinet containing and displaying the richest jewels of the eternal truth and blessing, and let us look humbly and patiently to it's Divine Author, to unlock to us the precious treasure, because He alone can unlock it, by His Holy Spirit and benediction.

Then shall we discover clearly, and to our unutterable consolation, that the miraculous journey of the children of Israel, as we have attempted to prove, involves in it the deepest and most divine mysteries relating to our own regeneration and salvation. We shall see further, that the parts, which have been the more immediate subject of our attention, are comparatively *few*, and have been only *partially* explained. And this consideration will lead us, if we are faithful to it, diligently to examine the history ourselves, in the fear of GOD and under the light of His Holy Spirit, recollecting the command of JESUS CHRIST, where He says, “*Search the*

*Scriptures, for they are they which testify of ME.\**  
And complying dutifully with this command of our  
GOD, we shall be led more and more, in our search  
of His Scriptures, to look up to Him of Whom  
they *testify*, that so we may attain to the inconceiv-  
able happiness of beholding His power and glory,  
which is the blessed end and design of the revelation  
of His Holy Word. We shall be glad, therefore,  
more and more, in reading the heavenly Records,  
to adopt the prayer of the pious man of old; and  
say, to the GREAT SAVIOUR, from the depth  
of penitent and believing hearts, "*Open thou mine  
eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy  
law.*"† AMEN.

\* John v. 39. † Psalm cxix. 18.

