



SERMONS

BY

WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY.

SERMONS

PREACHED

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS,

IN THE

Island of Barbadoes.

BY WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY.

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report. As deceivers, and yet true.
2 Cor. vi. 8.

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TO THE
SOCIETY AND CONGREGATION
OF
WESLEYAN METHODISTS,
IN THE
ISLAND OF BARBADOES,
THIS VOLUME

Is respectfully Inscribed,

BY THEIR LATE PASTOR,
AND EVER AFFECTIONATE CHRISTIAN FRIEND AND BROTHER,
WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Sermons were all delivered in the Island of Barbadoes; the twelve former in the Methodist Chapel in Bridge-town, the two latter on different Estates in that Colony. They are now made public, that the world may judge of the character and tendency of those Doctrines which the Wesleyan Missionaries preach in the West Indies; and that the Members of the Methodist Society in Barbadoes, may, by a recollection of what they have formerly heard, be encouraged to persevere in their Christian profession.

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SERMON I.

NAAMAN CLEANSED.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean!—2 KINGS v. 13.

THE history of Naaman is exceedingly interesting, and full of useful information. The whole of it is contained in the chapter whence the text is taken; so that this portion of holy writ is not immediately connected, either with the preceding, or with the following chapters.

Naaman was a Syrian by birth: This circumstance shews, that the favour of the God of Israel was by no means confined to the Jewish nation; but that he sometimes chose to distinguish individuals of Gentile origin, with peculiar tokens of his goodness, even beyond the Jews. To this remarkable fact our Saviour referred, in a most forcible manner, when discoursing to the haughty sons of Abraham in the synagogue at Nazareth:—"I tell you of a truth, many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian." (Luke iv. 25—27.)

Naaman was "a great man with his master, the King of Syria:" (Ver. 1.) He was great in wealth, in honour,

and in valour. He had rendered the most essential services to his country in a time of extreme danger; for "by him the Lord had given deliverance [or *salvation*] to Syria." But worldly greatness could not exempt him from affliction and disease; he was subject to the most loathsome of diseases, for Naaman was "a leper." That his leprosy was of the worst kind, and by human means incurable, appears from his anxiety to obtain healing, even from the prophet of a nation whom the Syrians hated, and with whom they were frequently at war. Could Naaman have been cured in his own country, he would not have applied to a prophet of the God of Israel. The severity of his disease may be also seen in the punishment of Gehazi. (Ver. 27; compared with Numb. xii. 10—15.)

The means by which Naaman was brought to be acquainted with the miraculous gifts of Elisha is related with great simplicity. "The Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel, a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress, *Would God, my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria; for he would recover him of his leprosy!* And one went in and told his lord, saying, *Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*" (Verses 2—4.) Here we see a striking instance of the providence of God, in over-ruling the calamities of war, so as even by its means to promote the good of mankind. It was cruel and unjust for those plundering parties of the Syrians, to devastate the country, and take captive the unoffending inhabitants of the bordering towns of Israel. But while God permitted so great an evil for the punishment of Israel's sins, he made it subservient to

his own wise and gracious purposes, by directing the steps of this innocent, captive maid to Naaman's house. As God had designed to afford Naaman an opportunity of being healed, he did not think fit, in consideration of his earthly greatness and dignity, to order a splendid embassy, prepared with great outward pomp, to be sent to Naaman, to inform him that so noble a person as he was might be cured by his servant Elisha; but the whole event was left to a variety of *apparently* fortuitous circumstances, and at last was brought about in a manner *seemingly* accidental: The young bond-servant uttered such and such words, and one went in, and told them to his lord. God is always working in every place, by every person. He accomplishes the greatest events by the simplest means. It is the wisdom of a Christian man to observe, as far as possible, *a whole providence*; to fix the mind, not only on some great and extraordinary result, but to trace that result to its cause or causes, that he may see how "all things WORK TOGETHER for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.)

How happy is it for masters to have in their service those who truly fear God! A religious servant is a great treasure. Though this young Israelitish maid was in the service of those who were the enemies of her country, nothing but good-will towards them reigned in her heart. She knew, that the same holy and exalted principle was possessed by the prophet Elisha; that when he saw Naaman *the leper*, he would forget that this Naaman was also a *Syrian*; and that he would immediately attempt to effect a cure. The work of God the Spirit in the soul of man is the same in all ages of

the world. The forgiveness of private, or of national injuries, is not peculiar to the Christian dispensation ; it has been finely exemplified by many holy men of old. —In the case of this captive maid, we discover also the great importance of early instruction in the things of God. We may reasonably conclude, that her parents possessed genuine piety in the degenerate age in which they lived. Hence she was taught to “remember her Creator in the days of her youth ;” was made acquainted with the character of Elisha, and perhaps in her childhood might have had an opportunity of attending his ministrations. When her parents were conveying instruction to her infant mind, they could not foresee that their little daughter would afterwards become a captive in “a strange land ;” but they were preparing her for the adversity that was unforeseen. Religion sanctifies all states, and all conditions in life ; because it sanctifies the heart, and so enables man to learn “in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content.” Hence this young female retained her piety, in the midst of idolaters ; and was not without a source of comfort in her captivity, while she was rendered the instrument of bringing great glory to God, and of advancing the good of man.

It seems that after Naaman had heard the words of his bond-servant, he told them to his master the king of Syria. The king of Syria immediately thought, that a celebrated man, like Elisha, would be found at the court of his prince ; or that, if not already there, he might be sent for, since the great man, Naaman, could not so far forget his rank, as to wait on a private person. “The king of Syria, therefore, said, *Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto—the King of Israel,*” (verse 5,) not to the prophet of Israel. And

he seems to have further supposed, that if the prophet had performed the cure, the monarch would at least have *all the honour of it*; therefore he wrote after this manner,—“I have sent Naaman my servant to THEE, that THOU mayest recover him of his leprosy.” (Verse 6.) The letter which Naaman bore to the court of Israel probably made no mention of the name of Elisha, the monarch of Syria writing as a king to a king. If this were the case, we may the less wonder at the dismay of the pusillanimous king of Israel, who, when he had read the letter, rent his clothes, and in the deepest distress, exclaimed, “Am I God, to kill, and to make alive, that this man doth send UNTO ME to recover a man of his leprosy? Consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.” (Verse 7.)

Elisha, the man of God, heard all these things. And doubtless, he spread the whole matter before the Lord in fervent prayer; and having obtained divine direction, he sent a message to the king of Israel, saying, “Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.” (Verse 8.) This message must have been deeply mortifying to Naaman’s pride. “What! must I wait on him for a cure?”—Yes; for humbling goes before healing.—His disease was deep, and his necessity very great. So, there being no alternative, “Naaman came with his horses, and with his chariot;”—came in state, with a numerous retinue, and having arrived at the prophet’s humble dwelling, he did not descend and enter the house, but “stood at the door.” (Verse 9.) Having received intelligence of his arrival, Elisha did not even come to the door to address himself personally to Naaman, but “sent a messenger unto him,

saying, *Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.*" (Verse 10.) Was not the prophet on this occasion wanting in courtesy? Did he not "behave himself unseemly," by "not rendering honour to whom honour was due?" In no wise. Elisha was a man of much prayer; and he gave himself more than ordinarily to the exercise of this duty, when, by his direction, or subordinate agency, any miraculous act was about to be performed. See him about to raise the widow's son: "He went in, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord." (2 Kings iii. 33.) It is likely, therefore, that when Naaman came to him, Elisha was pleading with the God of Israel on his behalf, that he might be directed what answer to give, and that the extraordinarily appointed means might be effectual to his cure. It was the praying faith of Elisha which gave efficacy to Jordan's stream.

Had Naaman known in what manner the prophet was employed, how little reason would he have had to become angry! But pride can never bear even the appearance of neglect. Hence Naaman was wrath, and went away, and said, "*Behold! I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.*" (Verse 11.) Here the pride of his heart fully exposes itself; all its secret workings are made manifest, while "out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh." While journeying from the court of the king of Israel, at Samaria, to the dwelling of the prophet, he had been full of vain imaginations, and, in his own mind, prescribing the method of his cure. He did not reason thus—"Behold! I am a poor, vile,

“ loathsome leper, altogether helpless, and utterly unworthy of so great a blessing, as that of being healed, and made whole ; I will therefore thankfully receive that healing by any means, or in any way, that the God of Israel may be pleased in his infinite mercy to choose for me : ” — But, says he, “ Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me ; ” he thought it a certainty, that the prophet would shew that mark of respect to so dignified a man ; “ and stand, ” not ascend into his chariot, (that would be unbecoming freedom,) but “ stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God ; ” for though a Heathen, Naaman conceived, that such a work could not be wrought without prayer, and that in this case it must be prayer offered up to JEHOVAH ELOHIM : And he further adds, “ I thought he would strike his hand over *the place*, and recover the leper. ” Remarkable words ! He affects to consider his leprosy as only *partial*, being unwilling to own the extent of this awful disease. It is not improbable, that Naaman had obtained some knowledge of the Jewish history. He might have heard, that Moses performed his miracles by stretching out the rod of his God in his hand toward heaven ; or, that the Jewish priests, in presenting some of their offerings, were accustomed to wave them up and down before the Lord : And, supposing that there was some mysterious virtue in that act, in allusion to one or both of those instances, Naaman might think that the prophet would adopt the same practice, and strike his hand, or, as the margin reads, “ move it up and down over the place, and so recover the leper. ”

The message of the prophet at once shewed, that all his reasonings on the subject of a cure were futile and vain ; that God’s method was quite different from that

which originated in his own heart. To that divinely-appointed method he could not yet submit. It enkindled the fire of his national pride: "If waters cleanse, " may I not be cleansed in the rivers of *my own country*, " instead of being indebted to the waters of Israel?" "Are not *Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?*" So he turned and went away in a rage." (Verse 12.)

But it was happy for Naaman, that, though he was a haughty and passionate man, yet, when the gust of passion was over, he was not unwilling either to listen to reason, or to receive advice from his own domestics, when it was respectfully offered. "And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, *My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean.*" (Verse 13.) Was not this reasonable advice suggested to their minds by the Holy Spirit of God? And did not that same Spirit accompany it, when offered, with his own gracious influence on the mind of Naaman? And in both instances was not that grace vouchsafed, *chiefly in answer to Elisha's supplications*, who was probably still on his knees, in his secret chamber, waiting before the Lord?—Naaman attended to the judicious counsel of his domestics: "He went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." (Verse 14.) He obeyed, and was made whole: And it appears probable, that Naaman was not only cleansed from his leprosy, but that his heart also was changed, and that he was cleansed from his sins;

that He who healed all his diseases, had likewise forgiven him all his iniquities.

That a great moral change was experienced by Naaman, is apparent from the rest of his history. His pride was gone. God had humbled his soul, so that in a spiritual sense he came out of Jordan as "a little child." Hence he did not immediately go back from Jordan to Syria, but he returned to the prophet; and instead of coming to his door with his horses and his chariot, expecting Elisha to come out to him, he alighted and went in to the prophet's dwelling, and, in the presence of all his retinue, "stood before" Elisha; and besought him to receive, not gifts, or a donation, but "a blessing" from him;—a *gratitude-offering*, by way of acknowledgment of the great obligation he was under to the servant of the most high God. Yea, and this same Naaman afterwards "alighted down from his chariot to meet Gehazi," who was only a servant of the prophet, and anxiously inquired of him, "*Is all well?*" (Verse 21.) Naaman did also then acknowledge the God of Israel to be the only true God; (verse 15;) and expressed his determination in future "to offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifices unto other gods, but only unto Jehovah." (Verse 17.) And although the 18th verse* may present

* Eighteenth verse. "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant this thing."—Several learned men would remove the difficulty by reading this verse in the past tense. But the form of the verb כִּיָּעֲבֹד, which occurs twice, is clearly future; nor is there a converse in either time, to give it a past signification. Naaman had expressed his *general determination* just before:—"Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but only unto Jehovah!" (Verse 17.) He now wished

some difficulties that we are not able to solve, yet the answer of the prophet,—“*Go in peace,*”—may assure us, that Elisha was satisfied with the sincerity of Naaman’s professions, and the lawfulness of all his future designs : Without the fullest conviction of which, the prophet would have never bid him *God speed*, or to *go in peace*. On the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that Naaman was healed both in body and soul ; and that he and the prophet are now enjoying the same glory, and adoring Him who is the God of their salvation.

to know whether the exception might be granted on *one particular occasion*, when he had to attend his master as he worshipped in the house of Rimmon. Now this was no proof either of Naaman’s insincerity, or of his want of decision ; but rather of the tenderness of his conscience, and of the teachableness of his disposition, since he had become a new creature. This was a point about which any one in his circumstances, just renouncing Heathenism, would naturally be perplexed ; he therefore desired to be thoroughly instructed concerning it, before he left the prophet. Now we must suppose, that on such a deeply momentous subject, agitated too as it was in the presence of Naaman’s retinue, most of whom were originally idolatrous, Elisha would not fail to supply him with such abundant information, as should clearly point out his duty. It is true, the Holy Spirit has not thought fit to preserve the prophet’s instructions on this matter in the sacred volume. They are not necessary *for us* ; nor were they *for the Jews*, seeing they had the second commandment of the moral law constantly taught them. The words, therefore, of the prophet—“*Go in peace*”—are not to be considered as his *immediate reply* to Naaman ; but rather as his *parting benediction*, after he had taught him out of the law ; and after Naaman had expressed, as we may reasonably suppose, his willingness to be obedient to its precepts.

Naaman made a singular request to the prophet :—“*Shall there not be given to thy servant two mules’ burden of earth ?*” (Ver. 17.) Was this request the result of extraordinary veneration for the man of God ; so that he desired to build in Syria an altar to Jehovah, not merely from the sacred earth of Israel, but from some portion of that earth which the prophet Elisha might have preserved of his own patrimony, when he left the oxen and the plough to follow Elijah ?

Having thus attempted to illustrate the history of Naaman, we shall now proceed more particularly to offer a few remarks on the words of the text, and improve them to our present edification. We have set before us

I. The gospel method of salvation: "*Wash and be clean.*"

II. That method of salvation is recommended by a most powerful, and convincing argument: "*My Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, WASH AND BE CLEAN.*"

I. The gospel method of salvation.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, *that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" (1 Tim. i. 15.) Of the plan of salvation, as exhibited in these scriptures, the words of our text will afford a striking elucidation.

1. That method of salvation is *exactly suited to the moral condition of man.*—Man is by nature sinful and depraved; he needs pardon and purity. His heart is not merely void of goodness, it is full of evil; "a corrupt tree bringeth forth corrupt fruit." The unholiness that exists in the heart is not quiescent, it is active and stirring: The impure fountain sends forth its defiling streams in every direction; and yet the source of iniquity remains unexhausted, the heart is unholy still. "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil

eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; *all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*" (Mark vii. 21—23.) Sin, therefore, in a moral point of view, is the leprosy which has infected the whole human race; it runs in the blood, and spreads its contamination throughout every part of man, so that there is "no soundness in him." Thus sunk and fallen, unholy and depraved, wretched and helpless, God has had compassion on him. He has "opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness;" a fountain of "water and blood:" It was opened on Calvary, in that great day when Jesus Christ died to take away the sins of the whole world. From the side of our wounded Redeemer, there flows a stream more efficacious and pure than the celebrated Jordan. Jordan cleansed *one* leper only; but the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ hath cleansed its *thousands*, and its *millions*: Yea, it is cleansing many *at this very hour*, and yet it has the same virtue that it ever had, and is of equal efficacy *for you*. And if you know the plague of your own heart, and are made sensible of your moral disease, all that is required on your part is, "Wash and be clean." There needs nothing for your healing, but a personal and an immediate application to the Saviour. It is not necessary to attempt to dry up, or to mollify, some of the most loathsome of the wounds which sin has made, as a *kind of preparation* for the cure. Only try this JORDAN, plunge into the fountain *as you now are*; and you shall find, that God's method of saving sinners is *just suited to your present condition*; in the very act of washing, you shall become clean.

2. The appointed method of salvation is *simple and easy to be understood*.—What simplicity is there in the message of the holy man of God to Naaman! He did

not bid him do "some great thing." He did not enjoin upon him the observance of a long penance, a painful routine of religious duties, a laborious study of the law of Moses, no not even of that part of the law which related to lepers, and the ritual ceremony of their cleansing; but—Away to Jordan!—He directs him to Jordan at once; and the sum of all the advice necessary in such an important case, was contained in four easy words, "*Wash and be clean!*" Why, surely it did not require great learning to understand this message. A child, an almost idiot, might have comprehended its meaning, as well and as readily as Naaman the Syrian lord. Just so it is with the method of salvation by faith in the death and blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ: "It is revealed unto babes." Even "the deep things of God" are all contained in the elementary principle of Christianity,—*justifying faith*; for "he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.)

To him that on thy name believes
 Eternal life with thee is given;
 Into himself he all receives,
 Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

O guilty and ruined sinner! "Believe thou in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

3. As this method of salvation is easy to be understood, so is it, in one respect, *easy to be performed*.—God on his part has removed every difficulty out of the way. For there is *nothing to pay* at Jordan's stream; there we may be cleansed "without money and without price." Naaman's "ten talents of silver, and six thousand talents of gold," were of no use to him here; he could not carry his riches into the river with him; they would then have been a mere useless burden, and more fit to sink him to

the bottom by their weight, than to serve as an equivalent for his cure, as he had intended. According to the means prescribed by the prophet, "*Wash and be clean,*" a beggar, a Lazarus, might have been cleansed as easily and as soon as Naaman.—So, my brethren, the sinner who would be saved, must be saved in *his own proper character as a sinner*, and not in *an assumed character*, as a person who is, at least, partially righteous. Whether he owe five hundred pence, or only fifty, still he is a debtor, and, in either case, absolutely and eternally insolvent; therefore, the condition of ABSOLVENCY, the act of grace, runs thus:—"When, conscious of thine utter ruin, thou hast nothing to pay, I will freely forgive thee all." Here then are "glad tidings of great joy" to lost, ruined, unholy sinners. They may be "justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) No merit is required on their part, no good work previous to the act of cleansing, beyond those fruits meet for repentance, which always accompany godly sorrow for sin. There is no limitation as to age, or place, or person. Grace, free grace, hath opened the fountain for sinners, and for sinners only; and the sole condition required, in the performance of which there is surely nothing meritorious, is, to "wash and be clean."

4. This method of saving man is *deeply humbling to the soul*.—See Naaman at the door of Elisha! His bosom swells with pride and indignation. He turns away his chariot, and departs in a rage. His servants expostulate. He considers, relents, and directs his way to Jordan. He comes within sight of the river; arrives at its banks; descends from his chariot, and stands beside the stream! What an affecting scene! But he is clad in rich

vestments, and over all is thrown his costly mantle. He cannot enter Jordan with these encumbrances. He divests himself of them all; and then he discovers what he would have fain concealed even from his own view, that his leprosy is indeed a dreadful plague; *that it is spread over the whole man*. Thus abased in spirit, and abhorring himself, he enters Jordan, and dips himself seven times,—sinks, as it were, under the purifying stream, that it may “wash him thoroughly,” and so he is made whole.—In this picture of humbled Naaman, let the poor, vile, unholy sinner see in what manner he is to come to Jesus Christ for the cleansing of his soul. He must know the extent of his malady. The robes of his Pharisaic righteousness, which, alas! are so far from being costly, that they are only “filthy rags,” must be stripped off; and his “spreading leprosy” must appear in sight. He must see himself to be a loathsome wretch, unfit for any but the vilest society, and that “from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in him, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.” (Isa. i. 6.) When the sinner has such views of his own wretched condition, and is filled with self-abhorrence, the time of his cleansing is just at hand. Despair of any other remedy will constrain him to apply to the Christ of God, unto whom no one ever applied without obtaining a cure. He will sink into that purple flood which issues from the cross, and lose all his guilty stains. *Immediately* he becomes clean: For

5. The gospel exhibits a *speedy and a present salvation*: “Wash, and be clean.” The blessing is immediately consequent on obeying the direction of God. So it was with Naaman: He was not cured by a slow process, in a gradual manner: He did not repeat his

application to Jordan, for several successive months or days, till he found the cure was wrought ; but the very day he bathed in Jordan, that self-same day was he made whole. He was a leper when he entered the stream, but he came out a cleansed man. "Such power belongeth unto God :—" And in such a manner does he cleanse the soul from the guilt and pollution of sin. The very moment a sinner comes to Christ in God's own way, that very moment he finds salvation, and obtains "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Ephes. i. 7.) It is true, there are some awakened sinners, who are a long time in finding the way to Jordan ; and there are others who find the way to it, but stand lingering on the banks, and afraid to venture in : But at whatever moment the sinner enters, and washes in the purifying stream,—whether it be in the hour that he is awakened, as in the case of the Philippian Jailor, or after a longer tarrying,—that moment he becomes clean : He finds that "the power of the Lord is present to heal." (Luke v. 17.) "If we *believingly* confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)—O then, let us all flee unto Christ ! Let us go to him without delay, without reasoning, without doubting. He not only invites us to himself ; he condescends by his servants to expostulate with our unhumbled hearts, that we may be persuaded "after so long a time" of wretchedness and misery, to try the efficacy of his atonement, and the all-hallowing virtue of his blood.

II. The arguments by which the gospel method of salvation is recommended unto us.—"And his servants

came near, and spake unto him, and said, *My Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, WASH, AND BE CLEAN?*"

1. This argument is founded on the supposition of one fact, which, perhaps, more than any other that can be adduced, demonstrates the awful extent of pride and unbelief in an unregenerate heart. The fact assumed is this:—The simplicity of the method of salvation, which God has appointed, is the grand cause of stumbling to many, and the very reason why they refuse that salvation when it is offered unto them. Man wants to be doing "some great thing;"—something corresponding with what he conceives to be the dignity of his nature, so that he may not be altogether indebted to the rich, free, and wholly undeserved grace of God, in and through the redemption of Christ Jesus. Hence the doctrine of SALVATION BY FAITH is generally spoken of with great scorn and contempt, by mere men of the world. It was owing to the influence of that lofty spirit which will not "submit" to God's method of justifying the ungodly, that the Jews rejected the Messiah, and remained without the possession of that salvation, which they seemed to seek and desire. "Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Rom. ix. 31—33.) It is owing to the operation of this same principle of pride, which is common to every man whose

mind is carnal, that multitudes reject the salvation of God, and die in their sins at last. They are unwilling to have a cure without purchasing it; or to obtain a righteousness that is not of their own establishing. They are labouring to "work out their own salvation," not merely *independently of God*, who alone can "work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure," but *in direct opposition to his working* in the heart; so that all their endeavours are nothing more than laborious efforts to be saved, in a way quite contrary to that which God hath appointed in his holy word.

2. See the unawakened sinner! I do not now speak of that poor, wretched, careless creature, who has no concern about his eternal interests, who drinks in iniquity as the ox doth water, and who is ready to say in his heart, "There is no God."—But I speak of such an one as is moral and exact in his conduct, who is, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Without much knowledge of his moral condition, or of the nature of his sinful malady, what few symptoms of unsoundness and disease he discovers, he labours to cure by his own art; and wherein his own skill fails, he comes to God, but *not through Christ*; and, by offering a few heartless prayers, seeks the perfecting of a cure, which he imagines is at least *begun* by his own endeavours. He is making a continual effort to recommend himself to God. Religious services are rather a drudgery than a delight; but he *toils* in them, and conscience keeps him continually to his task. He says a multitude of prayers; he reads his Bible; he fasts, and takes the utmost pains to prepare himself for devoutly communicating at the table of the Lord. He is regular in attendance on all appointed ordinances, whether of

divine or human institution. He gives much alms, he is honest, sober, just; he is not "as other men are." And what is the secret, the reigning motive, what influences him in the performance of all these duties? A *general*, a *sincere*, and perhaps, an *earnest* desire to be saved. But, mark, it is a desire *to be saved in his own way, by doing some great thing*. This sin of pride mingles with all, and mars all that he does. There is no sinner on earth who so daringly insults the eternal Jehovah, as the unhumbled Pharisee. He will not blaspheme the name of God in the presence of men; but, with the hardihood of Cain, he will venture to appear before God in secret, or in his temple, without the blood of sprinkling; and will, with apparent devotion, ask of God grace, mercy, and salvation, while he feels not his guilt, and while he refuses HIM whom God hath appointed to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. "O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider," that it is their first duty to come to the Saviour, and that if this duty be disregarded, whatever else may be attended to, "he that is unholy, must be unholy still!"

3. But let us observe the awakened sinner, who is not yet brought thoroughly to self-despair. He has been taught by the Spirit of God to know his disease; he sees, he feels, he deeply laments it. Sometimes he has such views of his vileness and depravity, that he almost despairs of obtaining a cure at all. He seeks for healing and salvation. He even applies to the Lord Jesus Christ, and pleads, in the presence of God, the merits of his Son, with much self-abasement of spirit, and with "strong crying and tears." *In theory* he renounces self, and all self-dependance; but in *point of*

fact, the refined Pharisaism of his heart remains. This leaven of the carnal mind is still working in his soul; else, what could keep him from Christ, and salvation? He is still seeking to do some great thing; deeper repentance, more tenderness of heart, greater earnestness of soul in prayer, instead of obeying the command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In reality, he finds it the hardest thing in the world to believe on the Son of God: And undoubtedly it is so, until the Spirit of faith is given. If God had enjoined him to continue on his knees for many hours, or to do penance for months, or to inflict on his body a number of painful stripes, or to engage in any laborious undertaking, as the condition of his salvation, he could have done it with cheerfulness: But O! to come to Christ, to believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness,—how can he possibly do this? His objection to this divine method of salvation *seems* to spring from humility, inasmuch as he pleads, with penitential sorrow, his utter unworthiness; but, *in reality*, it proceeds from pride, since he is waiting to get some kind of worthiness *preparatory* to his coming to that Saviour, who bids the unworthy, and none but the unworthy, to come to him. Hence it is, that many an awakened sinner is kept from Christ; and travails long in the pangs of the new birth, as though there were not strength to bring forth. Hence many a leper continues uncleansed, though the remedy is provided. Happier they, who, like Naaman, the first time they are directed to Jordan, do on that very day venture in, wash, and are made clean.

4. Let me then apply the argument contained in the text to every one who is conscious of his sin and guilt,

who feels his misery and danger. Are you come hither to obtain directions how to be made whole? I set before you no vast undertaking, no difficulties to discourage a poor guilty child of Adam. I wish you to consider two things, **FIRST**, That none but Christ can cleanse you; and, **SECONDLY**, That Christ can cleanse you now. Here you have a great advantage over Naaman, whose history describes your condition. When he had received the message of the prophet, he had to travel a considerable distance in search of Jordan: But the fountain that is to cleanse you, is just at hand; I can point you unto it in a moment. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!"

See him set forth before your eyes,
That precious bleeding sacrifice!

See the vital stream flowing from the side of your Redeemer! Consider its efficacy. What mighty virtue it hath! It cleansed a Manasseh! It cleansed a Peter, a Saul of Tarsus: It can, it will cleanse you: "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" Nothing can hinder if you are but willing now, just now, (while offering this prayer, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,") to venture into the crimson stream: There you cannot perish; there you shall, you must be healed. Away then with self. Away with righteous self. Come, O thou poor distressed leper; all vile, all diseased, all polluted, all sinful, as thou art! And come now! Step into Jordan at this very moment, and thou shalt be made whole; and, with all those who are cleansed, thou shalt return and give praise unto God.

5. Brethren, many of you are made whole; "sin no

more, lest a worse thing come unto you." "Be not high-minded, but fear." Keep to the plain, simple, gospel way of salvation. Naaman, indeed, after his cleansing, might return to Syria; nor was it needful, that he should ever see the Jordan any more. It is not so with you. Where you have been cleansed you must remain; there you must live, and there you must die. O never depart from the cross; never leave the Redeemer's side; but continue to live by faith in him who hath "redeemed you from all your iniquities," until he who is "able to keep you from falling, shall present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Then with all the redeemed shall you sing,—“Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!”

SERMON II.

MOSES' LAST WORDS.

There is none like unto the GOD OF JESHURUN, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The ETERNAL GOD is thy refuge, and underneath are the EVERLASTING ARMS: And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.—DEUTERONOMY xxxiii. 26—29.

THESE are the last words of Moses, who was one of the most extraordinary instruments ever raised up and employed, by God, to preserve and increase the knowledge of true religion amongst men. His whole life had been marked by great events; and especially that period of it in which he had been the leader of Israel. He was then to die. A more solemn and affecting departure can hardly be conceived. At the advanced age of a hundred and twenty years, neither enfeebled in body nor impaired in the vigour of his mind, he assembled the children of Israel together, to give unto them his last counsels, and his last blessing. FIRST, He pronounced a prophetic benediction on each separate tribe: And, THEN, In the lofty, sublime, and animating lan-

guage of the text, he described their collective happiness as a nation, arising from their relation to Jehovah, as his "saved people." The most abundant temporal felicity is promised to the Israelites,—the entire expulsion of their enemies, the Canaanites,—the most perfect security in the land of their possession,—the greatest abundance of the richest blessings of providence,—and the continual protection of the Lord, by whose power they should tread all their foes under their feet, and always gain the victory. If Israel had proved obedient to the law of God, all these promises would have been fulfilled in their experience, and the Jewish nation would have flourished in Canaan to this very day; while all the nations of the earth would have been constrained with admiration to exclaim, "Happy art thou, O Israel: Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!"

It is evident, however, on a bare reading of these words, that they are by no means to be confined to those temporal blessings which obedience to the divine law would have secured to the Jewish nation. They have a far higher and deeper meaning: They are prophetic of those more exalted and spiritual blessings which it is our privilege to possess, in all their fulness, under the Christian dispensation. Moses herein "prophesied of the grace that should come unto us;" and all who have received and duly improved that grace, are enabled to adopt the language of one who lived at the commencement of the Christian era: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up *an horn of salvation for us* in the house of his servant David; as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: *That we should be saved from our enemies, and*

from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." (Luke i. 68—75.)

"To you," therefore, "brethren," who hear that "God hath according to his promise, raised unto Israel, a Saviour, Jesus;—to you is the word of this salvation sent." (Acts xiii. 23, 26.) So that we may regard the text as describing:—

FIRST, The exalted character; and,

SECONDLY, The abounding happiness of all Christian believers. "Happy art thou, O [Christian] Israel: Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!"

I. The exalted character of Christian believers.

1. They are called by the most distinguished and honourable names,—“ISRAEL, JESHURUN.”

ISRAEL was the name given to Jacob, by the angel of the covenant, the messenger of peace, with whom that patriarch wrestled and prevailed, when, returning to Canaan, he was afraid to meet his brother Esau. You may read the whole of that instructive history in Genesis xxxii, 24—32. “Thy name,” said the angel, “shall no more be called JACOB, but ISRAEL: For as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed.” Here an allusion is made to the meaning of the name; but the sentence appears to be elliptical. The sense of the passage, as expressed a little more at large, seems to be this:—“As a prince thou hast power with God, and hast prevailed with him; therefore thou shalt also have power

with men, and shalt prevail with them." Success with God in prayer, we may ever regard as a sure pledge of a right and successful issue of every difficult matter that may occur in our intercourse with men. The appellation "ISRAEL," therefore, signifies *power as a prince with God*, and is expressive of DIGNITY, INTERCOURSE, and SUCCESS.

(1.) Who can describe the DIGNITY of the Israel of God!—They are of *the noblest origin*; "born from above; born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—They are of the *most elevated rank*, called "the sons of God;" and the Most High acknowledges them in that character, for "he is not ashamed to be called their God;" that is, he considers himself honoured by the believing, filial, cry of Father. They are not only sons, but "kings and priests; a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, shewing forth his praises who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." They are made "partakers of the divine nature," and are "perfect as their Father who is in heaven is perfect."—They have the *friendship and the services of the highest orders of beings*. The angel Jehovah with his host encampeth round about them: And all his host are their ministering spirits.—They have *the highest expectations*; for, being sons, they are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." "They know that when he doth appear, they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is."—See the honour and dignity unto which the lowly in heart attain! And in how remarkable a manner believers find the words of the Lord Jesus verified, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted!"

(2.) The Israel of God also enjoy COMMUNION with

him.—“Truly their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” The name of every place where they bow down to pray, is PENIEL. Whether they approach unto God “in the temple,” or “in an upper room,” or “by the sea-side,” or “in a wilderness,” or “upon a mountain,” they see God face to face; and with unrestrained freedom and confidence “pour out their hearts before him.” The Saviour, on whose name they call, is nigh at hand; and they “stir up themselves in prayer to take hold of him :” (Isaiah lxiv. 7 :) And as often as they declare, with holy vehemence, mingled with deepest reverence, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,” they are constrained, on rising from his presence, with gratitude to acknowledge, “He hath blessed me there.”

(3.) They have SUCCESS in prayer.—The true Israel prevail with God for every blessing they need. “Whatsoever they ask, they receive of him, because they keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” (1 John iii. 22.) At the feet of the Redeemer they have found the forgiveness of their sins. If they have erred, he has healed their backslidings. In the day of temptation they have cried unto him, and he hath bruised Satan under their feet. They have asked for purity of heart, and God has cleansed them from all unrighteousness. One thing more have they desired of the Lord, namely, grace to be faithful unto death, and he hath said, “My grace is sufficient for thee; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” O how happy, and how dignified are they, who have “subscribed with their hand unto the Lord, and who are surnamed by the name of Israel.” (Isaiah xliv. 5.)

But they are also called “JESHURUN.” This name signifies *undeviating uprightness*. Undeviating upright-

ness marked Jacob's conduct after he was called Israel. Before, he was JACOB *the supplanter*, inclined to dissimulation and deceit; but afterwards he became an "Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." He abhorred it from his very soul in others; however specious the occasion might have been that led to the practice of it. With what indignation, with what vehemence, with what care, did he in his last hours clear himself from having had any share in the deceitful and bloody conduct of his sons, Simeon and Levi, towards Hamor and Shechem, and their people! "O my soul, thou camest not into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, thou wast not united." (Genesis xlix. 6.) In this respect, all the Israel of God are like that venerable patriarch: As the true Jeshurun, they "abhor deceit;" and every one is "daily walking in his uprightness."—They are upright in their *principles*. They never confound right and wrong, calling good *evil*, or evil *good*; because all their principles are drawn from the "perfect law" of God.—They are upright in their *professions*; "speaking the truth from the heart," both to God and man.—They are upright in *practice*. They have "clean hands" as well as "a pure heart." They are careful "to defraud no man," to wrong no man, but to "render to all their due;" and that not of necessity, (to preserve their credit in the world,) but of choice, because it is one of the commandments of God; and his commandments are not grievous unto them. In fine, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, in which there is any virtue, or any praise," (Phil. iv. 8,) those things they observe and do. Thus we see that their

character corresponds with the distinguished names by which they are called,—“Israel, Jeshurun.”

2. Christian believers are described as being raised from the ruins of the fall; they are *a saved people*. “Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.” They are saved from sin, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: Saved from guilt and condemnation, by faith in his blood; saved from the dominion of sin, by faith in his power; saved from the in-being of sin, and from all its pollution, by faith in his intercession. For they believe that Christ is “able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. vii. 25.) “For,” says St. Paul, “if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; MUCH MORE, being reconciled, we shall be saved *by his life*.” (Rev. v. 10.)

They are thus saved “*by the Lord*.” “Salvation is of the Lord” alone; it is the consequence of redemption. The redeeming plan originated in the mind of God; it was wrought out by his own infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness; and its blessings are brought home to the heart by his grace. From first to last they are “saved by grace through faith.” And the more complete the salvation is, that is thus sought and received, the more God is glorified. So that the spiritual Israel being “saved by the Lord,” it is no wonder, or, at least, no impossible thing, that they should be saved from all sin: For who shall limit the Holy One of Israel, or venture to affirm, that to grant such a salvation to man on earth, is a thing “too hard for Jehovah!”

But they are “a saved PEOPLE;” that is, a collective and united body. Of old, it is true, there were different

tribes.—Moses thus enumerates them in this chapter ;—the tribe of Reuben, and the tribe of Judah, including the tribe of Simeon, and the tribe of Benjamin, and the tribes of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh ; and the tribe of Zebulun, and the tribe of Gad, and the tribe of Dan, and the tribe of Naphthali, and the tribe of Asher : But these were not *adverse* tribes, for all their nominal distinctions were lost, in the one common and exalted name of Israel,—a people,—*one people*,—and ALL “saved by the Lord.” So, my brethren, it is in the church of Jesus Christ. We have our distinct tribes, to each of which a disdainful world has affixed some honourable name, Pietist, or Puritan, or Saint ; but we have only one altar, and one sacrifice, and one God and Father of us all, and only one baptism, and but “one name” which we acknowledge to be “above every name ;” which name unites us all in the common appellation of CHRISTIAN ; and but one subject of glorying, which is,—that we are all “a people saved by the Lord.”

If then we are all “one in Christ Jesus,” it must surely be the bounden duty of every individual who is saved, or who is desirous of obtaining salvation, not to stand alone, unconnected with the people of the Lord ; but to unite himself with them in Christian fellowship, that he may enjoy their blessings, and share in the advantages of all their religious privileges. Let him unite with that tribe whose particular sentiments he judges to be most scriptural on minor points, and whose religious institutions he finds best calculated to promote his spiritual prosperity. But let him beware of becoming a modern Latitudinarian in practice, by wandering every where, and settling no where ; for such a practice, however plausible it may seem, by enabling a man to say,

“ I am of no party,” only marks indecision of character, and is equally contrary to reason and to the word of God. Christianity contains within itself the strongest principle of union; and from the establishment of the first Christian church in Judea, down to the present day, “ the multitude of them that have believed have been of one heart and of one soul.” (Acts iv. 32.) The character of God’s Israel is, that they are “ a saved people ;” saved from sin, but not from conflicts.

(3.) They are described as enduring a warfare :—
They have enemies.

Those enemies are numerous and invisible, subtle and powerful. “ We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephes. vi. 12.) Satan and all his legions are the enemies of the Israel of God. They seek to accomplish the destruction of believers chiefly by art and stratagem. They seek to “ beguile by their subtlety.” They have numerous “ devices ;” and with great cunning spread “ a snare for our feet.” Hence St. Paul bids us to stand on our guard “ against the wiles of the devil ;” and in the text these enemies are called “ liars,” or subtle deceivers : “ Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee.”

How often do they bring lying accusations against God’s elect, by tempting them to doubt of the divine goodness, and of the reality of that change which has been wrought in their heart by the Spirit of God ! Sometimes they bring lying accusations even against God himself, suggesting to the mind of some of the true Israel, *that they cannot possibly fall* to their final destruction, notwithstanding God, who cannot be untrue,

hath declared,—“If the just, who lives by faith, draw back unto perdition,” instead of believing unto final salvation, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” (Heb. x. 38, 39.)

To the mind of others they whisper an opposite falsehood, insinuating *that they certainly will and must fall*, and thus for a season harassing them with the most distressing fears,—though God hath said, “that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear,” and “that they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand, while they continue to hear his voice, and to follow him.” In fact, Satan has always very plausible reasons for his temptations; on which account, we are not to listen to him for a moment, but “to resist him steadfast in the faith.”

But the most common insinuation of these enemies is, *that sin cannot be wholly destroyed in this life*. Here Satan pleads for his own. Here he does not appear as an angel of light, but openly calls upon us to “fall down and worship himself;” and to join with him in acknowledging that the Son of God is not able yet “to destroy the works of the devil,” though he was manifested for that very purpose. These adversaries secretly exult at the general credence given to their vile insinuations on this subject. They magnify their own power; they exhibit the strength of their “high places,” and insultingly say, “O Israel! thou shalt *not* tread upon them,” and thus as directly give the lie to God’s word of promise, as they did unto God’s word of threatening, when they said unto the first transgressor, “Thou shalt not surely die.” There are some, however, who have so far “received an unction from the Holy One, teaching them all things,” as to believe with all their heart that

“the arm of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save.” While conscious of their own feebleness, they know that they shall become “mighty through God:” Not only to the making here and there a breach, but “to the *pulling down* of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and EVERY HIGH THING that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God;” and that, instead of being “brought into bondage to the law of sin,” they shall be able, having overthrown sin’s strong holds, to drag forth the last remaining corruptions, exhibit them as so many captives completely conquered by the all-victorious grace of the all-sufficient God, and, in this triumphant manner, “bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.)—But, however different may be the views of God’s Israel as to the strength of their foes, and the extent of the conquests they may gain over them; yet on this point they are all agreed,—to make no peace, to admit of no truce with them, but to war a good warfare, and to fight the good fight of faith, that they may at last lay hold on eternal life. And this eternal life shall be finally obtained by all who continue to war against their spiritual foes, although the degrees of salvation enjoyed on earth may greatly differ, for “according to their faith it shall be done unto them.” In the text their full privileges are placed before us; for in it we have, not only the exalted character of believers exhibited, but we have described

II. Their abounding happiness.

As all their salvation comes from God, so all their happiness is in him.

1. The first source of their happiness arises from the

exalted views they have of Jehovah their God. "There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky." (Verse 26.)

The matchless perfections of Jehovah have been a subject of triumphant rejoicing to the people of God in every age of the world. When Moses had seen the arm of the Lord made bare, in the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, and the great deliverance which had been wrought for Israel, he exultingly sung, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod. xv. 11.) And at the close of life, after forty years' more experience of the goodness of God towards his people, he is confirmed in the same joyous truth, and leaves it with Israel, as his dying testimony, that there "is none like unto the God of Jeshurun."

(1.) There is none like him in WISDOM. He is "God only wise." He is "light, and in him is no darkness at all." He is every where present, knows all creatures, searches every heart, perceives every motive and secret design, and can endlessly diversify the operations of his providence, so as to make "all things work together for good to them that love him." Hence we may rest with confidence in his sure word of promise, which declares, "No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." (Isaiah liv. 17.)

(2.) There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun in POWER. He created the world; and he upholds and governs all things by the word of his power.

(3.) None is like unto him in GOODNESS. He is

“ the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.” (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.)

(4.) There is none like him in FAITHFULNESS AND TRUTH. He keepeth covenant, he is mindful of his word ; and always performs his promises. Memorable were the words of Joshua to the tribes of Israel, just before his death : “ Behold ! I this day am going the way of all the earth : And ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you ; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.” (Josh. xxiii. 14.)

(5.) But, above all, there is none like unto him in COMPASSION, and in readiness to help, and to deliver Israel in every time of trouble. “ There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.” This glorious promise is no less expressive of the Mercy than of the Majesty of Jehovah. Both are combined ; it expresses the *majesty of mercy*. “ Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty : For all that is in the heaven and in the earth, is thine : Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.” (1 Chron. xxix. 11.) But though the Lord God be thus highly exalted above all, it is that he may observe all ; and especially that his “ eye may be upon them that fear him, and whose hope is in his mercy.” On him they every moment depend. Yet there are some seasons of infirmity, of affliction, of sorrow, and of temptation, in which they peculiarly need his help.—

On such occasions he comes, as it were, *visibly* to their relief. “They lift up their eyes unto the hills from whence their help cometh:” And lo! not a commissioned angel, nor a commissioned host appears; but the God of Jeshurun himself is seen, “bowing the heavens, and coming down,” that by his own manifested presence he may chase away all sorrow, and inspire the soul with joy.—He comes *swiftly*. “Make no long tarrying, O my God!,” is the prayer of Israel: And it is answered, “He *rideth* to thy help.” Prayer is turned to praise, and Israel exceedingly rejoices: “Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.” (Psalm xlviii. 4.)—He comes *with Majesty and Power*: “He rideth upon the heaven in thy help,” making the clouds his chariot; “and in his excellency on the sky.” When he appears to Israel’s help, the mightiest difficulties are removed in a moment; “the mountains flow down at his presence;” or renewed strength is given, so that with such a helper no load seems too heavy for Israel to sustain. Thus the happiness of believers is increased by every new trial, and increased in proportion to its severity and continuance; because it brings forth new proofs of the goodness and unchangeable faithfulness of the Lord their God.

2. A second source of Israel’s happiness arises from the views they have of God’s more than paternal care. “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” (Verse 27.)

Moses had finely expressed the same thought on a former occasion; and, from it, he had derived encouragement and consolation in one of his deepest afflictions: “Lord! thou hast been our dwelling-place in all gene-

rations." (Psalm xc. 1.) Not the sure abode of this fleeting race alone, "whose days are passing away in thy wrath, and whose years are spent as a tale that is told;" but thou wast the dwelling-place of our forefathers throughout their successive generations, as thou wilt be of our children in every succeeding age, when our shortened period of three-score years and ten is gone. "The eternal God!" Everlasting consolation flows from that everlasting name. Hence we derive encouragement from all the past manifestations of the divine goodness, towards those who have loved and served him. Do we inquire, Who was the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of the Prophets, of the Apostles, of the Martyrs, and who, in such a wonderful manner, brought them all out of great tribulation, and so graciously upheld them, till by "faith and patience, they were brought to inherit the promises?" Do we ask, "What is his name?" He is called THE ETERNAL GOD. He is therefore, *the same God to us that he has been to all his people, from the time of righteous Abel unto this very hour.* "This God is our God for ever and ever; and he will be our guide, even unto death." (Psalm xlviii. 14.) On this account, we are sure, none of our future hopes will be disappointed; for they are founded on the promises of the eternal God; and this God is known for a refuge unto all his saints.

He is a *constant* refuge: His love and power know neither measure nor end, towards those who confide in him and who are obedient to his word.—He is a *sure* refuge: Those who find shelter in him, and who abide in him, can never perish. Only let them dwell in God; and then they shall be as safe as if they were already in heaven, and as secure as if their warfare had already

ended in victory. Every believer abiding in God may confidently say, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.)

God is a *near* refuge; "a very present help in trouble." God is never so nigh to his saints as in the time of trouble. Then, with all the compassion of a father, he spreads around and underneath them the "everlasting arms." What sympathy, what pity, what gentleness, what bowels of compassion may we discover in his dealings with them! "In all their afflictions he is afflicted." "He strengthens them upon the bed of languishing, and makes all their bed in their sickness." His presence is with them, and that continually. Though unseen by mortal eye, He is all-seeing. With him are "the issues of life;" and if his children die, with him are "the keys of Hades and Death:"—Of Hades first; for he will admit their souls into Paradise, before he permits their body to be consigned to the tomb. He knows perfectly every degree of pain that is endured, or of weakness that is felt, and every conflict that may agitate the soul; and he hears every uttered and every unutterable groan. He is nigh to sustain them. In his arms they rest. He gives them such consolations as they are able to bear; shews them light arising in the darkness of temptation, which darkness often mingles with and increases the gloom of affliction; and causes them to hear his well-known voice, "It is I, be not afraid." "I will deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." (Job v. 19.)

The everlasting arms of a gracious God shall not only thus support all his afflicted children ; but they shall also strengthen them that are feeble : As it is written, "The Lord upholdeth all them that are ready to fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down." Thus the Israel of God are preserved and saved : And, enjoying happiness in the constant care and protection of God, under all circumstances they are enabled to testify, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress ; my God, in whom I will trust." (Psalm xci. 1, 2.)

3. A third source of their happiness arises from anticipated deliverance from all their sins.

In God they have not only protection and security ; but by his power they shall obtain complete deliverance and victory. "Out of weakness they shall be made strong, they shall wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens." God, by the power of those "everlasting arms" which sustain his people, shall thrust out the enemy from before them, and shall say, Destroy them." (Verse 27.) Who is the enemy so emphatically pointed at in this gracious promise ? Is it not "the carnal mind," which, as it is "enmity against God," is also the grand enemy of every believer ? Ah ! this is the foe that lurks within "Man-soul," unwilling to depart. But the power of the enemy is *already subdued* by the grace of God. No sooner does the penitent "believe on Christ with the heart unto righteousness," and obtain "the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God," than he experiences an inward change, "being created anew

after the image of God, in righteousness, and true holiness." "Sin then no longer *reigns* in his mortal body, that he should obey it in the lusts thereof; it has not the *dominion* over him, for he is not under the law but under grace. He is made free from sin, and having become a servant of God, he bears fruit unto holiness, that in the end he may receive everlasting life." (Rom. vi. 12, 14, 22.) But though sin has no *dominion* over a believer, nor can it have while he "stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free;" it nevertheless *exists* within him *as an opposing principle* to the grace received, until he is "sanctified wholly, and cleansed from all unrighteousness." It exists within him *as an enemy*. God can change the character of the sinner, but nothing can change the nature of sin. Therefore, we must not be at ease in Zion, or suffer sin to dwell quietly in the soul; for if we are content that it should remain, our carnal security will be its vigour, and we shall be in the most imminent danger of being again brought into bondage by its revived power. By prayer and fasting, by watchfulness, by self-denial, by activity in doing good, by diligence in all the means of grace, and, above all, by the constant exercise of faith, we must seek unto that God "who performeth all things for us," to grant unto us his "great salvation," that God may dwell in our hearts alone.

So great a deliverance cannot be obtained without a struggle. The enemy will linger, and retreat, and fly to the strong holds of carnal reasonings, and pride, and unbelief; but he cannot long remain, if there be *active faith* in the mighty power of God. "He shall *thrust out* the enemy;" *or, expel, drive him out*; and the

previous conflicts shall only serve to make the triumphs of Israel more distinguished and complete. The believer, when wholly sanctified, shall be *conscious* of his deliverance. He shall, as it were, see the enemy depart; for the glorious promise is, "God shall thrust out the enemy *from before thee.*" Nor does the privilege of believers end here; for the expelled foe is to be "destroyed," exterminated as well as banished from the heart; destroyed, to return no more for ever. Yes, he whose name is called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," can, not only "redeem Israel from *all* his iniquities," and, by virtue of his intercession, "save him unto the uttermost" *now*; but, he is also "*able to keep him from falling,* until he presents him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." The apostle Paul believed, that God was willing to make believers stand in this state of grace also, when he offered up the following inspired request to Him "who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think:" "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be *preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Thess. v. 23.) Many of the members of the Thessalonian Church, if not most of them, were at that time, "unblameable in holiness;" and he besought them "to increase and abound in love," to the end "that their hearts might be established unblameable in that holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.)

This state of salvation is indeed great for man to attain unto on earth. "To receive and ever hold fast

such a blessed hope of everlasting life," as arises from a consciousness of being "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," seems almost an impossibility. But it only appears so to us when we are "*forgetters of God!*" The immediate bearing of the questionable point is, not, *Can man be thus saved?* but, *Can God thus save him?* The first fixes the mind on the creature who is to receive it, almost to the exclusion of every other thought; the latter leads the soul directly to his feet who hath said, "*All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.*" If all power be given unto him whom we worship *as God, and Lord; as the Almighty,* cannot "He thrust out the enemy?" Cannot He expel the foe? Yea, he can do it, and he will do it like a God. "He will speak and it shall be done:" "He will say to the enemy, Be thou destroyed," and sin shall be no more.—Those of the Israel of God, who are not yet thus fully saved, are waiting to hear that word; they rejoice in hope of finding its speedy accomplishment, and are happy in anticipating this mighty deliverance to be wrought by "the power of the Eternal God." Then "shall their peace flow like a river, and their righteousness abound as the waves of the sea." This leads to

4. A fourth source of Israel's happiness in God,—the security and plenty that shall be enjoyed when saved from all their sins. "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew." (Verse 28.) They shall enjoy SECURITY,—PLENTY,—FRUITFULNESS.

(1.) "Israel *then* shall dwell in SAFETY alone." He then shall have a security, which he has not now. He

shall be safe *because alone*; because no Canaanite remains in the land. Were not the enemy expelled, Israel would be so far from dwelling in safety, that he would be every hour exposed to danger from a foe so treacherous, and so near. The grand cause, my brethren, why there are so many backsliders, either in heart or life, in the church of Christ, is, multitudes rest satisfied when they have received the blessing of pardon, without going on to "perfect holiness in the fear of God." They sit down contented with that unto which they have already attained; and dwell in imaginary safety, while sin remains within them: But they are far, very far, from that scriptural security and quiet which is here spoken of. How differently do those believers act, who, like Joshua and Caleb, "follow the Lord fully!" They do indeed enter into rest. They can testify, "all the promises of God in Christ are YEA, and in him AMEN, unto the glory of God by them." (2 Cor. i. 20.)—They dwell safe from *danger*. No sinful desire, no unholy passion, no unchristian temper, no evil word, no unkind deed, can "violate their rest, or stain their purity of joy." Their outward enemies, the world and the devil, may indeed assault them more powerfully than ever; and they may feel weariness, and fatigue, and heaviness in the conflict; but they shall win the conquest without receiving the slightest wound, or bearing the smallest scar. "They are *more than conquerors* through him that loved them."—They are safe from *fear*. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment." They have a holy, godly jealousy of themselves; but it is unmixed with any sinful distrust, or painful anxiety; because they are "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a

good work in them, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.)—They are safe from *miser*y. They have no "aching void;" for Jesus dwells within them, and they are become "the habitation of God through the Spirit." Thus Israel dwells in safety alone: And, without conceiving that the presence of the Canaanites is necessary to make them watchful, or advantageous by producing humility and a sense of dependence upon God, they deprecate the return of these their enemies as the greatest of calamities, and earnestly and sincerely pray,

None but Christ to us be given,
None but Christ in earth or heaven!

(2.) Israel now enjoys PLENTY. "The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine." These words originally pointed out the temporal abundance which the Jewish nation should enjoy by reason of the fruitfulness of the land. We have a parallel passage in Deut. viii. 7—9: "The Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it." They should not dwell in "a dry and thirsty land, where no water was," as they did in the dreary wilderness, where the finding of a plentiful spring was esteemed so great a mercy as to be worthy of being celebrated with the most solemn thanksgivings and rejoicings; (Numb. xxi. 17;) but throughout the whole length and breadth of the land of Canaan, there should be fountains naturally springing up, yield-

ing them plenty of the purest streams, and making the whole country so fertile and productive of the very choicest blessings of Providence, that it might be justly called "a land of corn and wine." "The fountain of Jacob" signifies the fountain of the descendants of Jacob, in the same manner as they are called "Israel" in the preceding sentence, and "Jeshurun" in a former verse.—Of the spiritual blessings exhibited in this passage, we have a fine illustration in our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria; and perhaps he had these very words in view, when he said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 14.) "This he" undoubtedly "spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive" in all that fulness promised in the latter days. They should not merely drink of the fountain, but, as it were, possess the whole; it should be within them springing up to life eternal. Thus it is with believers when purified by grace, and "filled with all the fulness of God." They are then enabled to sing,

The painful thirst, the fond desire,
Thy joyous presence shall remove;
But my full soul shall still require
A whole eternity of love.

They are also fed as with "corn and wine;" the richest blessings of the everlasting gospel are their constant portion. They are sustained by the manna of divine love, which is never permitted to fail, but comes down every morning new, so that they are "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." (Deut. xxxiii. 23.)

(3.) The plenteous grace within is nourished continually from above. There is no lack of divine influences. Their "heavens do also drop down dew." The store of their heavens is neither *exhausted*, nor *withheld*, nor *intercepted*; but the nourishing dew softly, silently, yet *copiously*, drops down from above. See Gideon's fleece! How dry! But he spreads it abroad to catch the dew of heaven. And there fell upon it, not here and there a scattered drop, but such a copious supply that it was completely saturated, "and when he arose early in the morning, and thrust the fleece together, he wrung out of it a bowl full of water." (Judges vi. 37, 38.) Fine emblem this of Israel's daily and abundant supplies from the God of all grace, when, instead of wandering in the wilderness, he rests secure in the land of his inheritance. Fruitful heavens make a fruitful soul. Hence believers become like the "garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." (Isaiah li. 3.)

5. The last source of their felicity arises from exultation in him who hath given them the victory. "Happy art thou, O Israel: Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places!" (Verse 29.)

We have already seen in what manner the God of Jeshurun hasteneth to the help of his chosen in the time of infirmity, of affliction, and temptation. But here he is called "the *shield* of their help;" he is their *defence* in danger, as well as their strength in weakness. "His truth is their shield and buckler." (Psalm xci. 4.) It is the "word of truth" which serves for "the armour

of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," and they are enabled to use it skilfully and successfully "by the power of God." (2 Cor. vi. 7.) And the same word of truth is "the sword of excellency," or as St. Paul calls it, "the sword of the Spirit." Covered with this shield, and armed with this sword, they may boldly face a host of foes; for a right understanding and use of the word of God will be a certain defence from danger, and the great means of ensuring to them the victory. And when sin is cast out from the heart, and "Satan bruised under their feet," then shall "their enemies be found liars unto them." Those enemies who suggested the impossibility of such a salvation shall be *proved to be false*; but *God shall be found "faithful* and just in forgiving their sins, and in cleansing them from all unrighteousness." Then shall they "tread upon their high places;" the strong holds that seemed impregnable *till death should shake them down*; the constitutional ramparts where their easily-besetting sins were lodged; even to those lofty eminences shall they ascend, and while treading the ruins beneath their feet, and surveying from thence the wonders God hath brought to pass, they shall triumph and sing the song of victory:—"We got not the land in possession by our own sword, neither did our own arm save us; but *thy* right hand, and *thine* arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto us. Thou art our King, O God; thou hast *commanded* deliverances for Jacob. Through thee have we pushed down our enemies; through thy name have we trodden them under that rose up against us. Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and put them to shame that hated us. In God

will we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. SELAH!" (Psalm xlv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.)

From the truths advanced we learn,

1. THE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.—The very spirit of the Christian religion consists in this one blessing, the *destruction of sin followed by the reign of righteousness and peace*; that "as sin hath reigned unto death," through the fall of Adam, "EVEN so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Nor is it possible for any man fully to know all the virtue there is in that name JESUS, till he is saved from all his sins. Nor can any man know the full efficacy of his atonement, or the infinite merit of his sacrificial death, until the "old man is crucified with Christ, and the body of sin destroyed." Then will he "*reckon himself* to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Neither can any man "know the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings," until he is made conformable to his Saviour's death. Christ therefore died and rose again for this end, that we might be pardoned and made holy: That we might become "a royal priesthood, an holy nation:" That "HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH" might be written on our foreheads while we live, and not on our coffins when worms are devouring us in the grave.—O then, let us follow after holiness. And let us pray, that the reign of righteousness may become universal in the church, and so shall it soon become universal in the world, and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God.

2 We learn THE WAY TO HAPPINESS.—Our text con-

tains a full answer to the inquiry, "Who will shew us any good?"—God here shews us every good in one: Be saved, and be happy. Happiness is to be sought for, not in the pleasures of the world, nor in the acquisition of riches, nor in the attainment of honour, nor in the smiles of men, nor in the learning of philosophy, nor in the seclusion of a monastic life, nor in the society of even the holiest saints; but in sanctity itself. To be holy is, to be like God; and he who is like God, must of necessity have the highest enjoyments that man can have out of glory: For he dwells "in God, and God dwells in him." Let him, therefore, who desires happiness, seek it in the attainment of that salvation which Christ has purchased for every man, and which he is now ready to bestow.

3. The present happiness and triumph of believers are only a prelude to their more complete happiness, and their more glorious triumph at the morning of the resurrection.—However holy and happy they may be on earth, still theirs is not an unmixed state of felicity. They may be "troubled on every side, perplexed—persecuted—cast down"—have many severe, painful afflictions, as distressing as "a thorn in the flesh;" and, while suffering, "a messenger of Satan may be permitted to buffet them;" and they must suffer these things, "because the body is dead on account of sin," even while "the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Still they are happy in being "the saved of the Lord" from sin, though not from temptation, and sorrow, and death. But yet a little while and the scene shall be changed: "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." The God of Jeshurun shall be seen riding upon the heavens in the help of his saints,

and in his excellency on the sky. He shall appear without sin unto their salvation: The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed: And the happiness of all the redeemed of the Lord being now full and complete, they shall shout forth their final triumph, saying, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen!

SERMON III.

THE AWAKENED SINNER'S STRUGGLES.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law. For I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: But I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: But the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.—
ROM. vii. 7—25.

It is of the utmost importance to observe, that in these words the apostle is not describing the state and expe-

rience of a *Christian believer*, but the condition of an *awakened sinner*, who is seeking for that deliverance from the guilt and power of sin which every believer in Christ has already obtained. Unless this point be well understood, we shall be in danger of lowering the standard of scriptural Christianity; and of forming an erroneous judgment of our own real character, by concluding that we are the children of God, before we have entered into that hallowed liberty wherewith Christ makes all free who are sons of God. Not only so, but we shall probably, in a great measure, rest satisfied in a state of bondage, conceiving that deliverance from sin is unattainable on this side the grave; and that we can never hope, without presumption, to rise higher in holiness than Paul, who, notwithstanding the eminence of his attainments, was constrained to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

This is not the language of Paul the apostle, but of Saul of Tarsus, after he was awakened, and while he was yet in the pangs of the new birth. But when he was "born of God, he sinned not," for he was then "a new creature." An account of Saul's justification is recorded in Acts ix. 17, 18: "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and putting his hands on him, said—*Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Now shall we suppose that when "he was filled with the Holy Ghost," he still continued "carnal, sold under sin?"

Or that when he received a commission to go unto the Gentiles, (Acts ix. 15, 16, 20,) that, by preaching unto them the everlasting gospel, he might "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," he was himself still under the power of Satan, and, though unwillingly, "led captive by the devil at his pleasure?"—The notion is both unscriptural and absurd.

That St. Paul is not, in the text, portraying the character, or describing the experience of a child of God, is so obvious a truth, that one cannot but wonder how a contrary opinion should have ever become current in the Christian world. No one doubts but that the apostle is writing of Christians in the fifth, sixth, and eighth chapters of this same Epistle to the Romans; and, were the mind uninfluenced by any peculiar prejudices, it would be impossible to avoid seeing, that, in those chapters, he is describing a character exactly the reverse of the one spoken of in the text. Believers are "freed from sin:" (vi. 7.) Yea, "they are dead to sin;" (vi. 11;) and sin "has not dominion over them." (vii. 14.) But the individual here mentioned has "sin dwelling in him;" (vii. 17;) and "he is carnal, sold under sin." (vii. 14.)—Believers "yield their bodily members as instruments of righteousness unto God;" (vi. 13;) but here we have one mentioned who is "brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members." (vii. 23.)—Believers are "justified by faith, and have peace with 'God;" (v. 11;) they have "no condemnation." (viii. 1.) But here we find a *guilty creature* slain by the law, and lying under its sentence of condemnation, while he acknowledges it to be "holy, just, and good." (vii. 10—12.)—Believers are *happy*; they

“rejoice in hope of the glory of God;” (v. 2;) “glory even in tribulations;” (v. 3;) “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” (v. 11;) have received “the Spirit of adoption;” (viii. 15;) are “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;” (viii. 17;) boldly enquire, “It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?” (viii. 33, 34.) And are “persuaded that nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God.” (iii. 39.) But here the apostle brings forward one who is *deeply miserable*; he is full of complaints; he feels a continual inward warfare, and is worsted in every conflict; and his distress having reached to a height bordering on despair, in the anguish of his soul he cries out, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?” Now from this comparing of scriptures in the same Epistle, it must surely be evident, that the apostle is not in all of them speaking of the same individual in the same stage of Christian experience; but that in those chapters he is describing the “*common salvation*” of *all believers*, and in this seventh chapter the conflicts of one who *desires that salvation of which he is not yet in possession*.

But, to put the matter beyond dispute, the apostle gives us three notations of time, which do distinctly shew to what period of his life he refers in the text. The first occurs in chap. vii. 5: “*When we were in the flesh*, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Observe, says he, sin thus reigned, “when we were in the flesh:” that is, in our native, carnal, unregenerate state, (see viii. 7, 8,) *before* we were renewed by the Spirit, and walked in the Spirit: “But now,” he continues, (verse 6,) “we are delivered from the law;”

from its condemnation, through faith in Christ Jesus, who "is the end of the law for justification to every one that believeth;"—"that being *dead* wherein we *were* held;" dead to sin, wherein we were held in bondage, previous to our "believing with the heart unto righteousness;"—"we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." The apostle having thus introduced and guarded his subject with the utmost caution, proceeds, throughout the rest of the chapter, to enlarge upon the topic he had mentioned in the fifth verse.—Again, to prevent any abuse of the statement he was making, in the ninth verse he thus speaks, "I was alive without the law *ONCE*." As though he had said, "Beware, O Laodicean Professors, who are at ease in Zion, and content while under the power of sin: Beware; I speak not of *what I now am, but of what I was once*; even before the commandment came, and after it came, till I was delivered through Jesus Christ my Lord."—The third notation of time is in the word "now," with which he begins the eighth chapter; and by which he concludes and guards the whole. Here St. Paul brings in himself as enjoying the same happy liberty with all his Christian brethren to whom he was writing. To them he had said: (vi. 22:) "But now, being made free from sin and become servants to God, *ye have your fruit* unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." And then, having treated at large of his own spiritual bondage until he was brought into liberty, he shews how he also was "made free from sin, and became a servant to God, and had his fruit unto holiness;" and concludes by drawing a sure inference, to the truth of which he was assured all his Christian brethren would testify, "Therefore, there is *now* no condemnation to

them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." And in this manner I, Paul, do *now* walk and live: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (viii. 2.)

These remarks, I trust, will serve to establish this one truth, that in the text St. Paul is unquestionably writing, not of a believer in our Lord Jesus, but of a convinced sinner. I shall make the truth, thus established, the basis of the present discourse; and proceed to consider

I. The condition of a sinner *before* he is awakened.

II. The means by which *he becomes* awakened.

III. The state of his soul *while* awakened.

IV. The way of obtaining deliverance and salvation.

I. THE CONDITION of a sinner before he is awakened; especially if he be a decent, moral man, like him of old, who, with apparent devotion, said, "O God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are."

His state is one of *ignorance, carnal security, and pride.*

1. IGNORANCE veils his understanding: "I had not known sin," says the apostle, "but by the law;" (7;) which implies, that until the law was applied to his heart, he had, during all the previous years of his life, remained deeply ignorant of sin.—He knew not its *nature*; that a willing thought of evil, or a wrong temper, or an irregular desire, is sin; any one of those things being a transgression of that law which extends to the "thoughts and intents of the heart."—He knew not the *source* of sin. He did not know that the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" that "from the heart," so far as the prevent-

ing grace of God does not influence it, "proceed evil thoughts;" yea, that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually." (Gen. vi. 5.) He gloried in his privileges as a son of Abraham, without being humbled by the recollection that he was a son of Adam: Nor did he consider, that, though he naturally inherited Adam's corruption and depravity, he could not naturally inherit Abraham's faith and piety.—He knew not the *workings of sin*. He perceived not its wiles and deceitfulness; nor how it mingled with all his actions, the most sacred as well as the most common. So that neither while he was studying the law at the feet of Gamaliel, nor while reading it in secret, nor while listening to it, and to the expositions of it which were given in the synagogue, was he performing one scripturally good deed, by which, "according to the law," he could have been justified. "All his works before justification had in them the nature of sin;" because they proceeded from evil principles; or at best, from mixed principles; so that, as they were not the fruit of faith and love, he was continually "coming short of the glory of God."—He knew not his own *corruptions and evil propensities*; neither how deeply they were rooted in his heart, nor how great a strength and influence they exerted, nor in how many innumerable instances he was under their influence and power. And because he was, touching the external righteousness which the ritual law required, blameless; and because his outward moral and religious conduct were unblameable in the eyes of men; therefore, he thought himself righteous in the sight of God. But in truth he was a sinner: God, and the holy angels, knew him in no other character. He was walking on heedlessly, in the smoothest

path of that broad way which leadeth to destruction. How could it be otherwise, seeing he had never entered the strait gate of evangelical repentance?

2. But he was EASY and SECURE. "Without the law," says he, "sin was dead." (8.) "Without the law!" What a striking expression! Why, he read the law daily, he was zealous for it, and perhaps in a great degree he inwardly revered it; but his "eyes not being opened to behold its wonders," the end was not answered for which it was given. It was with Saul as it is with multitudes who have law and gospel together in the Bible: He was "without it" *while he had it*, without any spiritual understanding of what it contained, without any correct views of its nature and requirements; so that the study of the law ministered to his pride, instead of serving to convince him of sin. In reading it, he felt satisfied with one of those vain imaginations which are natural to the heart of man,—an idea of having done his duty; when, alas! he performed not even the first of duties, "repentance towards God," nor saw how necessary that repentance was to save him from perishing everlastingly.—He was secure while in this state, because "sin was dead." It did not work in such a manner as to hurry him into any great outward excesses of evil. It existed, but its power seemed to lie dormant; the crafty adversary of souls avoiding to present those temptations which, by plunging him into gross sin, might, when the Spirit of God touched his conscience, alarm his fears and disturb his awfully dangerous tranquillity. Such being his condition, "sin being dead" in him, he would probably be led to view with indignation, rather than pity, those who were openly the servants of sin, and in his self-righteous

zeal blame them with severity, unmingled with compassion; not at all suspecting that "the strong man armed" who made their bondage so miserable, *held him* in a bondage no less degrading, only that he "kept his goods in peace."

3. This false security was increased by the PRIDE of his heart. Not only, says the apostle, "was sin dead without the law;" but, he adds, "I was alive without the law once." (9.) Though dead in trespasses and sins, in my own judgment of myself, in the estimation I formed of my own character, "I was alive;" righteous, in the divine favour, and in the way to inherit life eternal. He viewed his performances, his exact strictness, his conscientious regularity, with secret complacency and delight; and, notwithstanding some occasional failures, which he probably sincerely deplored, he was generally pleased with himself, and satisfied with his own condition. He had no dread of futurity, no alarming apprehensions of the wrath of God. Why should *he* fear? Having kept "all the commandments from his youth up," he was ready to ask, "What lack I yet?" What duty can I perform that I have neglected? He was "a Pharisee of the Pharisees;" a Pharisee of the strictest kind. Not one of those sordid, hypocritical wretches whom Christ so often rebuked with a just and tremendous severity; but he was one of those who might here and there be found, who endeavoured to keep the law, "without offending in one point." In this manner Saul of Tarsus lived. He *laboured* to obey: He "*went about*," with great care and pains, to "establish his own righteousness:" And he thought he had succeeded. His righteousness was one of "the things which he counted *gain* to him." So great gain, that, with it, he expected to

purchase heaven according to the terms of the law. Thus was "he alive without the law once."—And in this state of IGNORANCE, SECURITY, and PRIDE, he continued until that memorable day when he was aroused from his lethargy, and awakened from his delusive dreams, by the mighty power of God.

II. THE MEANS by which the sinner was awakened.

1. The outward instrument was the moral law. "I had not known sin but *by the law*; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, *Thou shalt not covet.*" (7.) But was not Saul of Tarsus awakened by an extraordinary appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ unto him, as he was on his way to Damascus?—No; that extraordinary appearance was *a circumstance connected with his awakening*: But neither the supernatural light that shone round about him,—nor the voice of Jesus himself, addressing him from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—would have been effectual, either to his conviction or conversion, *without the accompanying influence of the Eternal Spirit, applying the law to his heart.* It is the Spirit who convinces of sin, and he convinces by the law; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Therefore, at the moment "a light shone round about him," and he fell to the earth, a still more glorious light shone *within* him, shewing unto Saul the Pharisee that he was *Saul the sinner*; "the chief of sinners." He was then made conscious, that though he had abstained from what he conceived to be a violation of the third commandment, and would not even pronounce the Ineffable Name, yet was he "a blasphemer," because he had most awfully reviled the Lord's Anointed; and that he had notoriously broken the second table of the law;

for, instead of "loving his neighbour as himself," he had been "a persecutor and injurious." The law then was the grand instrument of awakening his soul, and as a "schoolmaster it brought him to Christ." It brought him to Christ *as a sinner*, and taught him to pray unto that Jesus of Nazareth whom he had before despised, and abhorred, and rejected, and against whose disciples he had been so exceedingly mad, "haling both men and women to prison."—Let none therefore despise the law: It is of vast utility both to saints and sinners; it gives the latter to feel their need of Christ, and by its salutary and wholesome warnings preserves the former from departing from him.

2. The excellency of the moral law is perceived by the sinner when he is awakened by its instrumentality. Hear penitent Saul's confession: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (12.) "The commandment was ordained to life," though "I have found it to be unto death." (10.) He acknowledges the excellency of the whole moral code in general, and the peculiar excellency of that commandment which is levelled at his most easily besetting sin; even of the commandment which saith, "Thou shalt not covet:" (7:) Of that commandment also he specially owns, that "it is holy, just, and good."—"The law is holy" in *its origin*; God who is "glorious in holiness" being its Author:—Holy in *its nature*; it is "a transcript of the Deity," and knows no enemy but sin:—Holy in *its tendency and design*:—And the character of holiness was impressed upon it, by the very circumstances that attended its delivery from Sinai, the people being commanded to sanctify themselves before they drew near to receive it from God. And such is the law still. The

apostle does not tell us what it was under the Jewish dispensation, but what he found it to be under the gospel dispensation, after the Son of God "had ascended up on high, and received gifts for men." "The law," says he, "is holy:" Christ hath neither altered its nature, nor lessened its demands; but he hath established the law by incorporating it into the gospel.—When originally given to the Jews, *it was given in connection with their sacrificial system*, and it was designed to convince them of the great necessity of it; And now, that Christ hath been offered up, it remains to convince men of the absolute need there is of his atonement; that, without the shedding of his blood, there could be no remission of sins. And when God brings a man to enjoy the blessings of the new covenant, he does, as it were, distinctly recognize the *ten commandments* amongst the chief of those blessings. For while he saith, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;" he also declares, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." (Heb. viii. 10—12.) The law then is now holy.—It is also "just:" Just in all its requirements; they all spring from the most perfect equity, and command man to be equitable, first to God, and then to his fellow-men.—And the law is "good," or benevolent; for the same God of love gave it, who hath since given a clearer manifestation of his mercy in the gospel of his Son.

The law is good or benevolent, as it respects the *design* for which it hath been given: "It was ordained *to life*." This was originally the intention of God in granting a law to man in Paradise: It was *designed to preserve*

him from sin; and was thereby "ordained," or appointed, to be the means of preserving his natural and spiritual life, and of preparing him, by obedience during his state of trial, for that eternal life which God might have graciously bestowed upon him. The end for which the law was originally given, is still answered, in a great degree, in those who find, in the Second Adam, that favour and image of God which they lost in the first. For viewing it as "ordained in the hand of a Mediator;" (Gal. iii. 19;) it is a great means of preserving the life of God in their souls. It teaches them the need they every moment have of the atoning blood, and of the continual grace of the Holy Spirit, to enable them to walk in gospel-obedience, even in that "love which is the fulfilling of the law."

But the design of the law, "as ordained to life," can only be answered in a holy creature; in man *before the fall*; or, according to the terms of the gospel covenant, in fallen man *after he is restored*, and "created anew in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness." Hence the awakened sinner, who subscribes to the excellency of the law, is not able to keep it; and being without justifying faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he proves the law to be unto him "the ministration of condemnation; the ministration of death." (2 Cor. iii. 7—9.) "The commandment," says he, "which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (10.) It shewed him his guilt, and pronounced sentence upon him as a criminal, dooming him to suffer all that misery, to lie under the weight of those heavy curses, to bear all that eternity of punishment, which every transgressor of the law justly deserves. The law neither promised him life *as a sinner*, nor gave unto him a principle of life; but its glare

shewed him his spiritual death, and left him under its power, while it doomed him unto death eternal. Thus the poor guilty sinner not only *heard* of its spirituality, but in his own experience “*he found,*” or proved, “it to be unto death.”

3. But we must not forget, nor even slightly mention, the GREAT AGENT who gave the law all its power. We live especially under the dispensation of the Spirit. God forbid, therefore, that we should forget to honour the Spirit; since, in the most absolute sense, we acknowledge that without him there can be “nothing good.” The apostle refers very much to his agency in the eighth chapter; and to his influence he alludes in that significant expression in the text, “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” (9.) “When the commandment came” with *light and power to my conscience*, as though it were then given for the first time; and to *me* particularly, as though it belonged to me, more than to any other sinner upon the face of the earth. Saul had often read, and had often heard the law, “Thou shalt not covet;” but it never particularly struck his attention, nor convinced him of his awfully guilty state, till that memorable day when the commandment came with an energy that could only proceed from the Spirit of God. And yet it is a fact especially worthy of our observation, that while the Holy Spirit, who is the only source of light, and power, and grace, was producing conviction of sin in the mind of so extraordinary a man as Saul, whom he designed to make a most distinguished vessel of honour, by constituting him the Apostle of the Gentiles; yet, even on such an occasion, that divine and eternal Spirit, whose wisdom is infinite, did not choose to work *by any new, immediate, extraordinary*

inspiration proceeding from himself, but by the medium of that law which had been given for ages, and which shall continue unto the end of the world. Thus did God the Spirit “magnify the law, and make it honourable;” and, as it were, testify of its sufficiency, and suitability, and excellency, as a means of awakening sinners, and of turning the heart to God.

We have seen by what means the sinner becomes awakened, let us now observe

III. THE STATE of his soul *while awakened*, and before he finds rest in the Redeemer.

Let us observe *His Convictions*: (Verses 7—14:) *His Conflicts*; (15—23:) And *His Despair*. (24.)

1. Let us trace his experience, and follow the train of Convictions that are felt in his heart.—He is convinced of his *sinfulness*. “Nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, “*Thou shalt not covet.*” (7.) The eyes of his understanding are enlightened, and he sees that unholy and irregular *desires* are sinful. He now perceives that the law takes cognizance of them; and that, though those desires may be hidden from human penetration, they are reckoned as “transgressions” by Him who searcheth the heart, and who requireth truth, or an exact conformity to his will, “in the inward parts.” He is convinced that if evil desires be reckoned as sin,—as indeed they are, being of themselves contrary to the law, and the germ of the foulest deeds,—then he has sinned in innumerable instances; and, notwithstanding his fair appearances, must in future take his station amongst publicans and harlots, and learn from them in what manner to apply unto God for mercy.—His con-

victions deepen, and he is shewn more fully *the depravity of his heart*: “Sin,” he cries out, “taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me *all manner of concupiscence*. For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” (Verses 8, 9.) Here he laments, not merely *the existence* of sinful desires, but their *workings* in his soul, and the deplorable condition to which he was brought, by the strength and power of his corruptions. “Sin,” says he,—that is, *the carnal mind; the principle of evil*; and in particular that sin of coveting, the guilt of which lay heaviest on his conscience; instead of submitting to the requirements of the law without any resistance, “sin took occasion by the commandment” to exert itself more vigorously, thereby truly exhibiting its own horrid nature. For sin, “the carnal mind, is *enmity against God*: For it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can it be.” (Rom. viii. 7.) Therefore “sin took occasion by the commandment *to work*,”—to become, as it were, a most active principle, all fermentation; to work “in him,”—in the very depths of his heart; not merely one kind of evil, but “*ALL MANNER of concupiscence*,”—every kind of sinful desire that could possibly have existence in a wretched descendant of fallen Adam. It is true, that, owing to the various degrees of preventing grace; the different measures of divine influence, which God in sovereign wisdom is pleased to give unto the children of men, before conversion, that “his own purpose according to election may stand;” (Rom. ix. 11;) there arises a great difference in *the practice*, and also in *the general state and temper of the mind* of the unregenerate. But it is no less true, notwithstanding this observable dif-

ference, that there exists in every one of them, while unrenewed, and considered simply as fallen creatures, a strong inclination, propensity, and tendency towards *every kind of evil, the very worst sins not excepted*. It is only owing to the grace of God, that every man does not become a Cain, a murderer of his brother. The apostle, therefore, in reference to his awakened state, did not express himself in too strong language; but, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he "spake forth the words of truth and soberness," when, with inexpressible grief, he acknowledged, that "sin wrought in him all manner of concupiscence:" Lust, pride, anger, wrath, every evil that can proceed from a "carnal mind." The power of the Spirit, while with him as a "Spirit of bondage unto fear," repressed those evils in some degree; but, by the light of the Spirit, he saw them in the dark den of his heart, and he felt "the motions of sins" from day to day. Before the commandment came, sin lay concealed in the soul, and the exterior life was blameless; but when the law attempted to check sinful desires, sin made a violent resistance, which served to bring all the corruptions of the heart to light. As a stream, that has a foul and muddy bottom, may flow on with a tolerably apparent clearness, while there is no obstruction made to its progress; but when its course is suddenly checked, it recoils, and stirs up all the filth that had lain undiscovered, exposing it on the very surface;—just so it is with the awakened sinner, when the stream of his Pharisaic life has been opposed in its progress, by the holy law of God. He then finds that his "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Hence he acknowledges, "when the commandment came, sin *revived*." It had lain dormant in

his heart before, but now it was aroused to stir itself. Before, it had been *secret enmity* against God; but now it became *open and avowed enmity*. It came forth to place itself, as it were, in array against the divine law; and though in this awful contest the thunders of Sinai made it *tremble*, those thunders could not make it *yield*. It seemed to have within itself an inexhaustible stock of vigour: "It revived;" it not only had strength and power, but it was a reviving strength, a reviving power; nor could it be subdued until the thunders and the lightnings of Sinai had passed away, and the wondrous cross appeared. The contest began at Horeb; but it was ended at Calvary. An arrow dipt in blood gave sin the deadly wound; it revived no more.

But that hour of salvation was not yet come to the awakened sinner. We have traced his conviction of sin and depravity; another prominent evil is now shown unto him, and one of which the Pharisee had great need to be made sensible,—*the pride of his heart*. "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." (11.) "Sin," the carnal mind, wrought within him in *divers* and in *opposite* ways. At one hour, it wrought in him all manner of concupiscence; and at another period, it ministered to a spirit of self-righteousness. But in both instances, (O how deeply is man fallen!) it made the holy law of God itself subservient to its own vile purposes and designs: "It took occasion by the commandment" thus to work in his soul. (See verses 8, 11.) This sin within him, after stirring up his corruptions, and making him, in heart at least, a greater transgressor than ever, (amazing to tell of its deceitfulness!) would appear to fall in with the law, and seek to compromise for past disobedience by in-

creased strictness and regularity of life in future. Hence the awakened sinner begins to be "turned aside" from the way of penitence and godly sorrow, by his own "deceived heart." The first terrors of conscience having a little subsided, he tries to cleave to his old principles, and again and again sets about establishing his own righteousness, endeavouring to come up to that superior degree of virtue which the law requires. But, alas! repeated failures only serve to plunge him into deeper distress; and at length draw from him the lamentable confession, "Sin," the pride of my heart, "hath deceived me" with *false notions of my own strength, and false hopes of being saved by my own righteousness*; and it has thereby "slain me,"—brought me into such utter condemnation, that all my hopes of being saved in this way are cut off. I am as a slain man, who has no power to make one single effort more.

These repeated failures produce in him a deeper conviction of *the aggravated nature of sin*. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid! But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." (Verse 13.) Far from throwing any imputation of blame upon his Maker, or upon his holy law, he is anxious to clear both, and owns his utter vileness before God and man. He asks, "Was the law, which is good, made death unto me?" As though he had said, Was the law prepared and constituted purposely for my condemnation? Made for my death? Made more strict and severe than was necessary, purely to aggravate my distresses, and to augment my eternal misery? Away with the insinuation,

whether it proceed from licentious sinners, or from the bottomless pit, or from the sore ranklings of my own heart! Though I have in my sad experience “found it to be unto death,” “God forbid” I should conceive that “the law was *made death* unto me,”—the source of spiritual death, because it instrumentally convinces me of it. God forbid that I should think, that, either from its own constitution, or in the intention of the Lawgiver, it is the originating cause of all the wretchedness I feel. The law does not create sin, but makes “*sin appear*,” and exposes all its hideous deformity to open view.

The awakened sinner is sensible, that the cause of all his misery does not arise from any outward thing, but *from within himself*. Hence, having cleared the law, he goes on with his mournful confessions: But “sin,” the carnal mind, is the cause of all, which, by opposing the law, “appears to be sin,” shews its own real nature, so that no softer name, as error, or infirmity, can be given to it. Yea, this sin “working death in me by that law which is good,” is hereby “shewn to be *exceedingly* sinful.” Its sinfulness exceeds human description, or even human conception, and can only be fully known by that holy Lord God who gave the pure and holy law, and who would not pardon the transgressors of it without the death and sacrifice of his Son.

Thus at length he is brought to a *thorough knowledge of himself*. “For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin.” (Verse 14.) The law is spiritual, and requires the obedience of the heart: “Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself!” (Luke x. 27.) This law also requires spiritual worship

from a spiritual and holy mind. But such an obedience I cannot render; such sacrifices I cannot offer; for "I am carnal,"—the very reverse of what the law shews I ought to be. Carnal in my mind: So deeply am I fallen, that my spirit is sunk to a state of servitude and dependence upon my bodily appetites for all its enjoyments. My mind is "a fleshly mind;" "earthly, sensual, devilish." Alas! "I am sold under sin!" I am sin's slave! Sin's very drudge! And that not by conquest merely, but, as it were, by purchase. "I am *sold* under sin;"—*self-sold*! By reason of my native inherent depravity, I have surrendered up myself to its service, and cannot get released. Formerly indeed I was its willing slave; but now I feel its tyranny. "I am sold *under* sin;" the tyrant tramples on me; governs me with almost irresistible power; and makes my dreadful yoke heavier and more galling every day. I struggle, but cannot conquer.—In this manner does the penitent bemoan his unhappy condition, and complain of the guilt and power of sin; which leads us to consider another circumstance in his present experience:

2. The inward Struggles and Conflicts of his soul with sin. (Verses 15—23.)

Here we perceive the difference between an awakened and an unawakened Sinner. He who is unawakened sins, in many cases, ignorantly, and without any deep concern. He may feel occasional touches of sorrow, when he is brought into any outward distress by his sins; or, in certain transient moments or hours, he may in some degree possess penitential grief, when the Spirit of God strives with him in a more than ordinary manner. But in general he lives without a knowledge of sin, and makes no effort to overcome it. It is

not so with the man who is thoroughly awakened. He feels the bitterness of sin, and would fain obtain deliverance from it. He has such inward conflicts with his warring lusts, such a contrariety of desires do work within him, that it seems as if he had two souls inhabiting the body. Still the evil principle is too powerful for the good, so that he cannot get the mastery over sin. This shews unto him, that conviction of sin is not conversion from sin; and that unless the Spirit, who hath awakened, do also regenerate him, he must for ever remain unholy, and, after all his efforts, die in his iniquities, and perish to all eternity. The inward warfare is well described in the text; and agrees most exactly with the state of every awakened sinner, while he is yet struggling to enter into the liberty of the children of God. He thus speaks:

“For that which I do, I allow not:” (verse 15:)—That evil which I do through the influence of *the governing principle*, the carnal mind, I do not allow or approve. My enlightened understanding perceives its sinfulness, my awakened conscience condemns me for the evil at the very moment I yield to it; yea, and in some degree, through “the measure of grace given,” my desires are opposed to it; especially in the absence of temptation. But neither knowledge, nor terror, nor desires, can stem the rushing torrent of corruption; I am borne away in spite of myself, for my heart is yet unchanged.—“For what I would, that do I not.” (Verse 15.)—The good I desire to effect, and do even strive to accomplish, (especially during gracious visitations and drawings from the Father,) “that do I not;” “it is high, I cannot attain unto it;” I continually fall short, and notwithstanding all my resolutions, desires, and determinations, I still

find that I have not the power, for I have not FAITH and LOVE. On the contrary, "what I hate, that do I." (Verse 15.)—The sin my soul abhors, on account of which I loathe myself, which has cost me a thousand tears, and brought me often to the very verge of despair; still that very thing do I. Alas! alas! sin has still the dominion!

But observe how he reasons within himself. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." (16.) As though he had said, Shall I then, conscious of my own weakness, complain of the law? *Is the law sin? God forbid!* Nay, even my unsuccessful efforts to obey, clear the law from so shocking an imputation. For if I do *that which I would not*, my very unwillingness to sin, (which unwillingness proceeds not from nature, but is a gracious fruit of the Spirit, or rather a gracious seed which shall hereafter bring forth fruit when I am born of God,) does tacitly admit the excellency of the law, and "consent unto it that it is good."

In the midst of this painful struggle, the poor awakened sinner is not altogether unconscious of the *beginning* of a divine change in his heart. Notwithstanding the discouragements that sink him to the earth, he is enabled to perceive a difference between his present and his former condition. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." (17.) "Now then it is no more I that do it," with *approbation and delight*, as formerly. That period is past. If I cannot conquer sin, I will no longer, I will never more, heartily love it; it is "no more" the willing "I," but "sin." Ah! here is the source of misery, "sin that dwelleth in me." Were it only sin *without him*, as seen in evil example;

he might have strength and resolution to shun and avoid its contagion: But it is "sin" *within him*, in his very nature. Sin "dwelling" within him; always at home, and ready to answer to every call of temptation. O what shall the sinner do? Whither can he flee from his own heart?

These views of indwelling sin are painfully humbling to his soul. He makes confession thereof: "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not." (18.) It is not with him a matter of speculation, a theory, a conjecture, but he says "I know," by bitter experience, "that in me;" yea, I say not merely in man in general, but "in me," a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, the blameless Saul; "in me," "that is, in my flesh,"—my carnal mind, and my corrupt body,—"dwelleth no good thing:"—Absolutely no good, not the smallest degree of any good, no good thought, no good desire, no good design. So utterly does the humbled sinner renounce self: Sinful self, and righteous self, he alike disclaims. Or rather, he at length sees, that he has no righteous self to disown, that his righteousness is but as filthy rags, and that he is both guilty and helpless before God.—For, says he, "to will is present with me," through the influence of the Spirit shining into my darkness, and "making me willing in the day of God's power;" but "how to perform that which is good, I find not;" nor can I, without the communication of *more grace*, when God shall accomplish in me "all the good pleasure of his goodness, even the work of faith with power." This sense of *inability* is so constantly before his eyes, and so deeply and painfully felt in his heart, that he repeats it over

again in nearly the same language as before: "For the good that I would, I do not: But the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." (Verses 19, 20, compared with verses 15, 16, 17.)

The mourning sinner, having thus reasoned concerning his miserable condition, gives us, in the following words, the conclusion to which he had come: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." (21.) "I find then *a law*;" so he calls the power of sin, because the tyrant under whom he is sold assumes a kind of authority and right to govern; and often pleads for the necessity and utility of that authority in a very plausible manner; nor can "the law of sin be reversed" till the soul be created anew in Christ Jesus, and placed under the governance of the law of love. "I find then a law, that, when I would do good,"—am on the point of engaging in it, or have just commenced some effort to do good: Then, just on that day, in that very same hour, "evil," native evil, this "indwelling sin," is "present with me." It seems not to wait for any outward temptation to call it forth; but of its own accord, from its own "enmity against God," it rises up, and stirs at once to prevent me from effecting good, and even from seeking unto God, as I desire, for salvation. O how does this grieve the poor unhappy sinner! He can hardly retire to pray, or take up the word of God to read, or go to his house for instruction, but in some way or other this "evil is present with him;" so that he seems to be every day "sinking deeper in the mire, where no standing is."

Is he then wholly without comfort? Has he never any gleam of a dawning day? Has he no kind of enjoy-

ment? That cannot be affirmed. Blessed be God! he is not in hell, and therefore not in utter despair. You shall hear him speak of a kind of "delight;" a temporary delight which he hath, even while "sowing in tears:" "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (22.) He delights in that very law which condemns him. He loves its purity, though he does not possess it; and he desires the favour of the Lawgiver, though he feels that he is angry with him because of his transgressions. But alas! those transgressions are continually increasing, so that his delight in the law of God is not of long continuance; it is often interrupted, and sometimes wholly absorbed in terror and a dread of condemnation. For scarcely has he expressed that delight, but he adds, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." (23.) As though he had said, When for a moment the power of sin seems to be suspended, and I begin to feel an inward delight in the law, that very delight revives its power; "I see"—my approving glance at the law is suddenly diverted, by the re-appearance of my old enemy:—"I see another law in my members," my bodily members, which are *sinful* as well as *mortal*, "the desires of the flesh" according with the naturally "sinful desires of the mind." (Ephes. ii. 3.) And that "other law in my members" rushes forth to the contest, and hastens to "war against the law of my mind;" that is, against the law of God, which I would fain adopt and receive as the law of my mind, that by it alone I might be governed. But sin has yet the mastery. Just now, when I have been delighting in the law of God, it wars against me; it has success; it has gained another

victory; I am overcome once more; it is "bringing me into captivity," dragging me back again to my old bondage, "to the law of sin which is in my members." Alas! Alas! how am I fallen! The whole man is corrupt: Body and soul are alike under the dominion of sin. I am just where I was; I am still sin's slave; for "of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage." (2 Pet. ii. 19.)

Hence having been both convinced of sin, and yet still kept in bondage to it, notwithstanding his various conflicts with it, the awakened sinner's misery comes to a crisis—

3. He is brought to Self-despair.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (25.)—Dr. Adam Clarke observes, "There seems to be here an allusion to an ancient custom of certain tyrants, who *bound a dead body to a living man*, and obliged him to carry it about, till the contagion from the putrid mass took away his life." We may well suppose, that the cry of such a person would be, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this dead body?"—What a picture of misery is here exhibited. The sinner's *own corrupt nature is his body of death*; from it he cannot possibly release himself; he carries his loathsome burden night and day, and whoever else knows happiness and peace, the burden of his cry is—"O wretched man that I am!" He knows not what to do, nor whither to turn, nor to whom to fly. Of one thing, however, he is at length fully convinced; that he cannot deliver himself, and that if some one come not to his aid he must die, and perish to all eternity. Hence he becomes an inquirer—"Who shall deliver me?"—And that inquiry is not long made, before he

finds an answer. He is directed to Jesus Christ; he believes on his name, and obtains deliverance in a moment, and with joy and gratitude he exclaims, "I thank God" that he hath delivered me, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

IV. THE WAY of obtaining deliverance and salvation. It is sought by Prayer;—it is obtained by Faith;—it is acknowledged by Thanksgiving.

1. *It is sought by PRAYER.*—Of Saul of Tarsus it was said, by the Lord, unto Ananias, "Behold he prayeth:" He prayeth unto that Jesus of Nazareth whom he once hated, and who had appeared unto him in the way. On his name he was calling for salvation. The burden of his supplications was, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" So great was the distress of his soul, that for the space of three days and three nights he did neither eat nor drink; but in the private house at Damascus to which he had retired, without making himself known to any one, he continued alone, repenting bitterly of his sins, and seeking pardon and deliverance in earnest prayer to God. And it was while Saul was in the act of prayer, that the Lord Jesus appeared in a vision to Ananias, and sent him to the distressed sinner with a message of comfort and mercy. Deliverance had not yet come to his heart, but it was preparing for him while he was groaning in secret before the Lord. In this state of soul, Ananias found him; and, far from encouraging him to *rest in it*, he exhorted him to persevere in "calling upon the name of the Lord." "And now," said he, "why tarriest thou?" Why shouldest thou groan any longer, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" Jesus, who "appeared unto thee in the way

as thou camest," is ready to deliver thee *now*. "Arise," therefore, "and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16.) He obeyed; and, by calling on the name of the Lord, he was saved. We see, therefore, that while he had not power to conquer sin, he was incessant in the use of *that power* which the Spirit had given him;—the power of uttering his complaint in the dust before God, and of "confessing his sins," that he might find God "faithful and just in forgiving his sins, and in cleansing him from all unrighteousness." And this will always be the conduct of a penitent sinner. Whenever there is a true awakening of soul, there will be an earnest crying to God for mercy: For when the Spirit becomes "the Spirit of bondage unto fear," he does as naturally inspire a cry for deliverance, as when he becomes "the Spirit of adoption" he inspires the filial cry of "Abba, Father!" The blessing is not then far distant: The praying sinner shall soon become a saved sinner, and a praising believer. "Surely his salvation is nigh them that *fear* him, that glory may dwell in our land;" (Psalm lxxxv. 9;)—the glory of freedom from the law of sin and death.

2. The blessing of deliverance, thus sought by prayer, *can only be obtained by FAITH*. In the address of Ananias unto Saul, we do not find any express mention of faith; but in the words, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and *be baptised*," faith was undoubtedly implied; for "he that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved." Nor was it until he had *justifying* faith in Christ that he obtained deliverance from his sins. A faith in Christ he certainly had while a mourning penitent: He believed him to be the Messiah; his very first

cry, after he was smitten to the ground, was, "Who art thou, *Lord?*" And in a general sense he believed him to be the Saviour. And this faith had its fruit; it assisted him to cry unto God for mercy; it enabled him to resist sin. But until he received that power from on high, whereby he was enabled specially to believe on Jesus *as the justifier of the ungodly*, he was not able to obtain mercy, or to overcome his sins. That appropriating, justifying faith is, in an eminent sense, "the gift of God;" so that the penitent sinner cannot believe *when he will*, but when God is pleased to give him *the power*; and yet God will not give that power unto him, unless he continue earnestly crying, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." *This is the very best prayer a penitent sinner can use, if he be careful to enter into the spirit of it.* In this manner Saul continued crying unto God, until he was "saved by grace through that faith which is the gift of God; and which is not of works," does not spring from any of those works which a penitent can perform; but is quite a superior principle to any thing that he professes, and comes directly from above:—"Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephes. ii. 8, 9.) Accordingly he himself acknowledges how deeply he was indebted to the grace of God, when, many years afterwards, he related his conversion to Timothy. "And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with FAITH and LOVE which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. i. 14.) Here he tells us, that faith and love were both received in that same hour, when "the exceedingly abundant grace of God" was manifested in causing him to "obtain mercy." (1 Tim. i. 13.) And the remembrance of that manifested grace drew forth from his heart this cheering declaration,

“ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners:—Of whom I am chief.”—(1 Tim. i. 15.) Hail happy, humble triumphant, believing Paul! Thou needest not “indwelling sin”—to humble thee; *God's pardoning love has done that, without the help of sin!* Yea, and thou hast far more excellent humility, than thou hadst when groaning forth, “ O wretched man that I am!”—Then thou wast a *humbled sinner*; now thou art a *humbled saint!* Then thy humbling made thee *wretched*, now it makes *thy heaven*; and the joyous language of thy lowly, believing heart is, “ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

3. This great salvation is *acknowledged by thanksgiving*. The saved apostle arrogates nothing to himself To God he ascribes all the glory, through that Redeemer whose blood purchased salvation, and whose Spirit brought it home to his heart. The poor carnal man, who was “ sold under sin,” is now set at liberty. Christ enfranchised him by purchase; and the Spirit brought him the enfranchisement, knocked off his fetters, and bade him go free. He is not only saved from condemnation “ through the remission of sins that are past;” but a power is given him of continuing to be saved from any future condemnation, because he is saved from the dominion of sin. He is now so far renewed in the image of God, as that “ the righteousness of the law,” (Rom. viii. 4,)—of the law of Christ, that gospel obedience which is required of all who are justified, and which, through the merits of Christ, is accepted of God, as well pleasing in his sight, instead of Adamic obedience,—“ may be fulfilled in him,” by the power of the indwelling Spirit, who has taken up the place of

indwelling sin, and who teaches him to walk not after the flesh, but to be obedient to his voice, and to be led by him, that he may continue to be a son of God. Then shall he every moment be

As far from danger as from fear
While love, Almighty love is near.

O how glorious a salvation is this ! How worthy that God who is “ holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works ! ” How worthy that Redeemer who came “ to bruise the head of the serpent,” to “ destroy the works of the devil ; ” “ to condemn sin in the flesh.” *To condemn sin* ; to pass sentence of death upon it, “ in the flesh ; ” not in his own flesh, for he was without sin, but in the hearts and lives of all believers. And this sentence of condemnation against sin is *executed*, when “ our old man is *crucified* with Christ, and the body of sin destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Rom. vi. 6.) How worthy is such a salvation of the eternal Spirit, who is denominated the Spirit of holiness, the Spirit of might, and the Spirit of power ; the Comforter, who is to abide with us for ever, and whose office it is to glorify Christ unto us, by shewing us his utmost power to save ! And how well does “ it become the just to be thankful ” to the eternal tri-une God “ who hath thus saved them, and called them with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Tim. i. 9.)—
“ O sing unto the Lord a new song ; for he hath done marvellous things : His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name : *Shew forth his salvation* from day to day.

Declare his glory among the Heathen, his wonders among all people. Praise him for his mighty acts : Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord ! Hallelujah ! Praise ye the Lord !” (Psalm xcvi. 1 ; xcvi. 2, 3 ; cl. 2, 6.)

4. “ Men and brethren, unto *you* is the word of this salvation sent.” By nature ye are all unholy ; by actual transgressions ye have all become guilty ; and the strength of your original corruption is vastly increased. “ If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say, that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1 John i. 8, 10.) Let us not therefore attempt to deny either *original* or *actual* sin ; let us neither say, that “ we have no sin” by nature ; nor that “ we have not sinned.” But while you acknowledge these *awful facts*, let me inquire, Have you never felt the plague of your own heart ? Have you never groaned and been troubled before God on account of your sins and sinfulness ? What ! Never ? Then are you “ dead in trespasses and sins :” In the most deplorable condition a sinner can be on this side of hell. A corrupt, vile, loathsome, abominable wretch appearing *carelessly* or *proudly* before God in his house ; chained to the body of this death ; and yet, through the amazing deceitfulness of the human heart, loving, instead of loathing, the putrid mass, and vauntingly boasting of righteousness and liberty. May God the Holy Spirit smite thy conscience, O sinner ! Thou art past any effort of mine, or of any other man : Thy case is so desperate, that thou art farther from heaven than even “ publicans and harlots,” whose crimes have well nigh driven them

to despair. What, a *Pharisee be saved!* One who is not "as other men are!" Who can bring *him* to the feet of Jesus Christ? O thou Almighty Spirit, illustriously perform thine own office, as the convincer of sin! O thou who didst send home the law to Saul of Tarsus, repeat the miracle of grace; let thy word at this moment come with power to that man's unhumiliated heart, that he may groan out his misery unceasingly, until he is justified through faith in the name of Jesus.

O distressed penitents! *This is the day of your deliverance!* The Lord, even Jesus, who hath appeared unto you, causing you to abhor yourselves, and repent as in dust and ashes, hath sent me unto you, that ye may receive your spiritual sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Why tarry ye? seeing that "*now* is the accepted time, that *now* is the day of salvation." Believe in Jesus. Use that faith you have; whereby you are already "moved with fear." Ask God's great gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit, to convince you "of righteousness," as he hath already convinced you of sin. How easy is it for the Spirit of God, to work in you "a death unto sin," and to give you a "new birth unto righteousness!" And faith in Christ, as your atoning Saviour, shall make the Spirit's power your own. "This then is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." At present, this is almost your only work; it is the main thing to be attended unto. In prayer, believe; in hearing the word, believe; and you shall be saved. O penitent! Dost thou now believe on the Son of God? It is he that talketh with thee. Even now he is speaking to thy heart. He is helping thee in thy present struggle to get into liberty. He is listening to all thy groanings in self-despair. He hears thy heart's com-

plainings:—"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" And he saith, I will deliver thee: "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save:" I take the prey from the mighty, and deliver the captive from the tyrant sin's pretended *lawful* power: I hasten that the captive exile may be loosed. I am come: I am here; the word is *nigh* thee, O mourning sinner, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart. Behold! I proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. I appoint unto thee beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "Go forth," ye ransomed, believing, pardoned sinners; and "shew yourselves" clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness, that God may be glorified, for his mercy in releasing the captives, and setting you free from the law of sin and death.

O ye that are "the saved of the Lord;" stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." Be continually "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." So shall you ever retain a grateful and lively sense of the mercy of your heavenly Father who hath delivered your shoulder from the yoke of sin; and so shall you be preserved by his power through faith unto final salvation. If you "go on to perfection," you "shall never fall." But having a most blissful assurance of final and eternal glory, you shall be enabled to triumph in the language of *believing, obedient, and holy* Paul, saying, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

SERMON IV.

ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION.

And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more.—2 KINGS ii. 12.

“ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” This declaration of St. Paul refers to the scriptures of the Old Testament, *the whole of which* were given by divine inspiration. Of course its history is inspired, as well as its doctrines and prophecies. “In old time holy men of God were moved, by the Holy Ghost,” to write, or to collect, those valuable records of individuals, and of nations, which have been preserved by the providence of God, and transmitted unto us for our edification.

But what the apostle hath affirmed concerning the different gifts of the Spirit, in the Christian church, may perhaps be accommodated to the various degrees of inspiration given in the preceding ages. “Now there are *diversities* of gifts, *but the same Spirit*. And there are *differences of administration*, *but the same Lord*. And there are *diversities of operations*, but it is *the same God which worketh all in all*.” (1 Cor. xii. 4—6.) The same *kind and measure* of inspiration was not necessary for

the historian, whose province it was to preserve the memory of past or present facts, as for the prophet who had to "shew things to come;" but God gave unto every man "gifts according to his office."

Those, however, who wrote the Sacred History, were undoubtedly so far guided by the Spirit of Truth, as to be incapable of error. They have recorded only the things that are true. They were influenced by Him, both in the *selection* of facts, and in the *manner* of recording them, so as to permit several of the comparatively unimportant particulars to sink into oblivion; while those events only should stand forth in a prominent manner, that would be most useful and important to all future generations.

It is because "the same Spirit," "the same Lord," "the same God," inspired both the sacred historians and the prophets, and in later ages the apostles, that we find in numerous instances such a natural accordance between scripture history and scripture doctrines. They do mutually illustrate each other. An example occurs in the text. One of the most glorious doctrines revealed in the word of God is, a future resurrection of the dead, and the final glorification of all the redeemed, who shall ascend to meet their Lord in the air, "and so be for ever with the Lord." The history, the delightful history of Eijah's Translation, does, as it were, make that glorious immortality visible even to our outward senses. We read it over—we enter into the subject—we pause—we gaze upwards—we catch a glimpse of the prophet—we see "mortality swallowed up of life"—we make Elisha's language our own—"My Father! My Father! the chariot of Israel!, and the horsemen thereof!"

Elijah, whose name signifies *JAH*, "My God," was a native of Tishbeh, (1 Kings xvii. 1,) a city beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead. He was born many years after the separation of the ten tribes from the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and consequently he was, strictly speaking, an Israelite, as contra-distinguished from one born in Judah. His labours seem to have been chiefly confined to the kingdom of Samaria. He lived in the reign of Ahab, who was the most wicked king that ever ruled over Israel. Elijah's ministry, according to the chronology of commentators, continued fourteen years; that is, from before Christ 910, till before Christ 896. His work being then finished, he was in a most triumphant manner taken to his reward. It is not, however, solely to Elijah's Translation that I shall now divert your attention: I purpose to take an extended view of his history, which will enable us the better to understand the memorable event mentioned in the text, and afford an opportunity of endeavouring to elucidate several other important passages of the word of God.

In reviewing the history of Elijah, let us consider

- I. His character as *a man* ;
- II. His abilities as *a teacher* ;
- III. His actions as *a prophet* ;
- IV. His reward as *a saint*.

Every man has certain predominant dispositions of mind, which form his character. And it is observable, of all those individuals whom God hath raised up and chosen for any remarkable work, that they have been eminently qualified for it, by the *peculiar constitutional temperament of the mind*, which seems to mark them out

as having been "separated to the work from their mother's womb."—This remark will be illustrated while we are dwelling on

I. Elijah's character as a MAN.

1. He possessed *undaunted courage*.—He was a LUTHER. It was not in the power of man to make him fear. It is no mean proof of his courage, that he dared to be singularly good, and to adhere steadfastly to the faith and worship of the God of Israel, when he thought that "he was left alone to serve Him." This was practically saying, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." (Matt. xxvi. 33, 35.)—In the performance of his duty, he could face danger without the least dismay. He was on all occasions ready for the service of the Most High, though it exposed him to the utmost peril; and when commissioned to deliver a message from God, to a wicked, and powerful, and wrathful king, he manifested no reluctance, but went forth and delivered it; just in the manner that the Lord had commanded him. The very opening of his history contains a proof of the boldness of his spirit. "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*" (1 Kings xvii. 1.) This was a very ungracious method of beginning his prophetic ministrations. And that it exposed him to great danger, is evident from the direction he received, after delivering that threatening from God:—"And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, *Get thee hence, and turn thee*

eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." (1 Kings xvii. 2, 3.)—When those years of drought had expired, Obadiah informed Elijah of the wrath of Ahab, in terms which shewed that the monarch was under the influence, not of occasional gusts of passion, but of deep hatred, and lasting resentment against the prophet:—"As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation, or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: And when they said, *He is not there*, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not." (1 Kings xviii. 10.) But notwithstanding this alarming account, Elijah, unmoved, and most firmly relying on the divine protection, said unto Obadiah, "*As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day.*" (1 Kings xviii. 15.) Elijah did not indeed go and shew himself unto Ahab, in the presence of an assembly of his idolatrous courtiers, and thus expose himself wantonly to unnecessary danger; his courage did not thus degenerate into *rashness*; but he sent a message by the mouth of Obadiah to the monarch, and Ahab, it seems, unattended, "went to meet Elijah." (1 Kings xviii. 16.) The wrathful king, soon as he saw the prophet, gave vent to his ire in bitter reproaches; further he was not permitted to go, "the remainder of wrath was restrained:"—"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?"—In what a bold, and dignified manner, yet without any mixture of rudeness or contempt, did the prophet reply to the unjust accusation: "*I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.*" (1 Kings xviii. 18.) Elijah makes no mention to Ahab of that personal hatred which he bore towards

himself as the prophet of the Lord, but only of his *public sins* in transgressing the law and renouncing the worship of God for idols.

We have a still greater instance of his courage, in his going to meet Ahab, at the direction of the Lord, after Ahab had taken possession of Naboth's vineyard. This was a hazardous service. Beside the displeasure of Ahab, he was exposed now to the active revengeful wrath of Jezebel, who, because the prophets of Baal had been cut off, had expressly sent a messenger to say unto Elijah, "*So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.*" (1 Kings xix. 2.) On receiving that message, he retired for a season into the wilderness; "he arose, and went for his life." (1 Kings xix. 3.) But her threatenings and Ahab's anger were alike disregarded the moment that the Lord said unto him, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: Behold he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it."—(1 Kings xxi. 18.) He arose and went. He met the king just entering upon the enjoyment of those possessions he had, through covetousness, so perfidiously and cruelly acquired. The sight of the prophet made Ahab tremble, without any previous discourse about "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." His conscience smote him. He feared the man whom he had often wished to slay. He betrayed the servility of his spirit, and the guilt of his mind, in the timorous address,—"*Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?*" (1 Kings xxi. 20.)—Then did the prophet thunder forth, in the ears of Ahab, those terrible denunciations, which in substance were—"*In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even*

thine.'—' *The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.*' (1 Kings xxi. 19, 23.)—Thus in looking at the character of Elijah, throughout his life, we see the scripture adage finely verified—"The righteous are bold as a lion."

2. Elijah was a *compassionate man*.—Severe was he indeed, and even terrible to a wicked monarch, and to his ungodly subjects: But he was exceedingly *tender and compassionate* towards a poor widow who feared the Lord, though she was a Canaanite by nation. Our Saviour has noticed the prophet's visit to that poor widow: "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land: But unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow." (Luke iv. 25, 26.) It is with admirable propriety that Jesus Christ remarks, the prophet was "sent" unto her, distinctly recognizing in that expression the providence of God. Never was visit more seasonable. Never was the pious adage more strikingly illustrated:—"The time of extremity, is the time of God's opportunity."—"As the Lord thy God liveth," said she to Elijah, "I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: And, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." (1 Kings xvii. 12.) Thus she spake. But God's "thoughts were not as her thoughts." He would not rain down upon her manna from heaven: But he would make that *last meal* the means of yielding her day by day her daily bread, until the famine should cease in the land. *God can work miracles at any time, but his promise can fail at no time.* The poor widow "received a prophet in the

name of a prophet, and she found a prophet's reward." Under her roof he abode many days: And in the day of distress, when her son was afflicted, and died, with what tenderness and compassion did he "take him out of her bosom, and carry him up into the loft, where he abode, and lay him upon his own bed." (1 Kings xvii. 19.) With what holy fervour did he intreat the Lord, "that his soul might come into him again," until the Lord heard his cry, "and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived." And when his prayer had been answered, with what joy did he "take the child, and bring him down out of the chamber into the house, and deliver him unto his mother;" saying with the most tender and heart-felt delight, "See! thy son liveth!" (1 Kings xvii. 20—23.) O if Israel had but feared God, and served him, as did that descendant of the idolatrous Canaanites, how happy would Elijah have been in his ministrations! Instead of being a "Boanerges, a son of thunder," he would have been a "Barnabas, a son of consolation."—That he was willing to give consolation, when it was needed, even to degenerate Ahab, may be inferred from what appears to have been Elijah's last message to that Prince: "And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?*" Dost thou indeed observe his bitter distress, on account of the late denunciations of my anger, with feelings of tender sympathy? And dost thou desire to be the bearer of some tidings of comfort unto him? Thou hast my authority to say, "Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: But in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house." (1 Kings xxi. 29.) Elijah, so far from repining, like Jonah, at the long forbearance

of God, doubtless communicated the respite to Ahab, humbled as he was, with the most heart-felt satisfaction and joy. The compassion that flows from a heart under the influence of the grace of God, is irresistibly moved at the sight of an enemy in distress. Such was the compassion enthroned in the heart of Elijah.

3. He was a man of *great self-denial*.—On account of the prophet's exceedingly temperate habits, his wants were few, and could be supplied without much difficulty. Hence he was easily sustained at the brook Cherith, by its pure stream, and by the "bread and flesh which the ravens brought him in the morning and in the evening." (1 Kings xvii. 5, 6.) Afterwards when the brook was dried up, and he went to sojourn with the widow at Zarephath, we see, he did not desire very costly fare. As she was "gathering of sticks, he called to her, and said, *Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel that I may drink.* And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, *Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.*" (1 Kings xvii. 10, 11.) And on the plain food which "the barrel of meal," and "the cruse of oil," supplied, he subsisted in her house for many days. And, a few years after this period, when his wants were miraculously supplied by an angel, as he "slept under a juniper tree" in the wilderness, nothing more was brought than "a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water." (1 Kings xix. 5, 6.) This was enough. The prophet had learned, in "whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content." Being fed with the hidden manna of divine love, he could joyfully forego the luxuries, and even the comforts of life.

There appears to have been many points of resemblance between the prophet and John the Baptist; on

which account, John is pointed out by the name of Elijah. (Mal. iv. 5; compared with Matt. xi. 14, and xvii. 10—13.) Like John, it is probable, Elijah remained chiefly in the deserts “until the time of his shewing unto Israel.” And as John had “his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins;” (Matt. iii. iv;) so Elijah is described as being “a hairy man,” that is, wearing a coarse, hairy garment, and “girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.” (2 Kings i. 8.) Such a garment was necessary for Elijah, who was so often obliged to retire into the wilderness, to preserve his life, where he must have been frequently exposed to the nightly frosts and dews. It might, however, have given him an austerity of appearance, especially when contrasted with the softness and effeminacy of the delicate priests of Baal. Such having been the usual dress of Elijah, some ages after, when his reputation became established as by common consent, those false Prophets who aspired to the same honour in which he was held by posterity, and who pretended like him to be called in an extraordinary manner to the prophetic office, were fond of imitating his appearance, and of putting on “a rough garment to deceive.” (Zech. xiii. 4.) Of those pretensions, however, it seems they were soon made ashamed.—It is not improbable, that, during the period of Ahab’s humbling, it was a desire to imitate the prophet’s austerity, that induced him to “put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fast, and lie in sackcloth, and go softly.” (1 Kings xxi. 27.)—Elijah being thus a man of self-denial in all his habits, he probably acquired a great degree of bodily vigour, which tended to increase the firmness of his mind. He was not a “reed shaken with the wind,” as he would have been, if he had “clothed himself in soft raiment;” but he had

“his body in subjection,” and learned to “endure hardness;” to bear great fatigue, and persecution, without “becoming weary and faint in his mind!”

4. Elijah was a man of *ardent zeal for God*.—He was deeply concerned for the divine glory, and felt a constant, holy jealousy for the honour of Jehovah. “I,” says he, “have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts.” (1 Kings xix. 10, 14.) And this jealousy for God’s honour, was mingled with uncommon grief for Israel’s sin. He deeply mourned, that they had been guilty of “forsaking the covenant, throwing down the altars of the Lord, and of slaying his prophets with the sword.” (1 Kings xix. 10, 14.) It was the fervour of his zeal which pointed his addresses with such just severity, in all of which he aimed at the destruction of sin, the salvation of the sinner, and the glory of the Lord. Nothing but a zeal for God,—a zeal “according to knowledge,”—a zeal that was *the pure flame of love*,—could have enabled him to persevere in his work, surrounded as he was with the most overwhelming difficulties, and without so much as one individual, till Elisha was raised up, to strengthen his hands in the Lord. He was “always zealously affected in a good cause,” therefore he always laboured in that good cause, and bore reproach for its sake. He loved the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; and he loved his brethren as himself: Therefore did he continue “steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,” even though he feared that “his labour was in vain in the Lord.”

Such were the most remarkable traits in the character of Elijah. AS A MAN, God had graciously endued

him with extraordinary courage, sweetly blended with a tender, compassionate spirit; he had formed him to endure hardness; and he had given him a constitutional ardour of spirit, which, under the sanctifying and directing influence of divine grace, produced in him a burning zeal for the divine glory. Endued with such dispositions, and inclined to such habits, he was prepared to do the work of his day, the work to which he had been called by the Holy Spirit, and for which he was eminently fitted by those mental qualifications, those spiritual gifts, which had been bestowed upon him.

II. His abilities as A TEACHER.

1. *His principles were sound.*—All Israel had forsaken the Lord, and were given to idolatry; but Elijah had not forgotten the great commandment of the law, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and *him only* shalt thou serve.” He knew and he taught the way of God in truth. He constantly appealed to the law and to the testimony; and, by a powerful application of it to the conscience, he sought to turn the heart of the children of Israel “back again” to the God of their fathers. When he officiated as a priest of the Most High, in the presence of four hundred and fifty of Baal’s Prophets, and before assembled Israel, he seems to have prepared his sacrifice *as the law directed*; with some additional circumstances, however, which that extraordinary occasion rendered necessary. Now it was this implicit obedience to the known will of the Most High, this deep veneration for the law, which, more than his own extraordinary gifts as a prophet, made him “a man of God,” and rendered him “perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” His eye was single, and his

whole body full of light: His principles were sound, *because they were all drawn from the written law*; and therefore he was enabled to teach the way of God perfectly.

2. *His piety was deep.*—Of this every one must feel convinced who considers that, from the sacred history, it is evident God never rendered any man in a more than ordinary manner useful, who had only an ordinary share of piety. Moses, Isaiah, Paul, and John, were all men who lived within the vail, and dwelt in the holiest place. Elijah also enjoyed very deep communion with God. Only witness the wonderful power he had with God in prayer. With him it only seemed to be “ask and have.” “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” saith St. James; and he immediately refers to Elijah as an example. “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: And it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.” (James v. 16—18.) At first view it may appear not only singular, but improper, that the prophet should have prayed earnestly for so severe a judgment as the withholding of the rain from heaven. Was not this action inconsistent with genuine piety, and contrary to those feelings of benevolence, which ought to have ever been predominant in Elijah’s mind? If we read the verses with which the apostle James closes his epistle, and which immediately follow the passage before cited from him, we shall find an answer to this inquiry, and every difficulty will be cleared up. “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and

one convert him ; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 19, 20.) Now at this period the whole Israelitish nation had most awfully "erred from the truth ;" and the prophet, being filled with the Spirit of God, by whose hallowing and divine influence his own passions were all sanctified, and placed under the governance of the law of love, though he were naturally a man of like passions with us ;—and knowing also, by the teaching of this Spirit, that nothing less than a heavy national calamity would prove effectual to the conversion of his brethren ;—was led *from the purest benevolence* most fervently to pray, that their conversion might be brought about by such means rather than that they should be left quietly to perish in their transgressions. That judgment did issue in their national reformation ; (1 Kings xviii. 39 ;) and, without doubt, in the conversion and final salvation of some ; and thus did he "save many a soul from death, and thereby hide a multitude of sins."

It is remarkable that the prophet had this power with God in prayer at the commencement of his ministry, for the apostle James has selected an instance from the early part of Elijah's public labours. (Compare James v. 16—18, with 1 Kings xvii. 1.) We have no means of knowing whether Elijah had at all appeared as a public character until the day that he stood before Ahab. He might perhaps have been, until then, a private and almost unknown individual, lamenting in secret the profligacy of the people, and earnestly exploring the salvation of all those who lived in that degenerate age. It was probably while thus giving

himself continually to prayer, that the Spirit was poured out upon him from on high, to prepare him for the ministry of the word; and, as there was no Samuel in Israel to shed upon him the anointing oil, it is not improbable, that, without this ordinary anointing, he received the Spirit of the Lord God, sanctifying him for that great work to which he had been called. And not being disobedient to the will of God, he immediately entered on the duties of his holy office, and delivered his message to Ahab, as in the immediate presence of God. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand." (1 Kings xvii. 1.)

Doubtless this holy man enjoyed much communion with God in his solitary retreat at the brook Cherith. Nor was he without the same source of consolation while dwelling in the house of the Canaanitish widow. There she, in answer to his praying faith, "received her dead raised to life again." (Heb. xi. 35.) At his prayer on Mount Carmel, "fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice:" (1 Kings xviii. 38.) At his prayer also, rain was given. Having dismissed the people, he ascended Carmel, and in the most solemn manner, as in the presence of Jehovah, "cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." While he placed himself in that devout and prostrate posture, probably on the very spot where the altar had that day been erected, and an answer given to his prayer in the descending fire, and where the ashes of the burnt sacrifice might have still been consuming, he bade his servant ascend to a higher part of the mountain and look towards the Mediterranean sea. The servant departed, and Elijah continued pleading with God. The servant returned with the message,

“There is nothing.” Elijah, in no wise discouraged, bade him “go again seven times.” And the prophet remained prostrate before God, and with increasing fervour did he plead, till the prayer of faith was answered,—it “*availed*,”—it “*availed much*,” even for guilty Israel. God could no longer be inflexible in his judgments; prayer caused “mercy to rejoice against judgment;” for lo! “there arose a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.” The little cloud had indeed a most significant form, intimating that the extended hands of Elijah, which were “lifted up to God in the Heavens,” while his body was reverently prostrated towards the earth, had obtained a most visible and marked answer to his prayer. The cloud spread;—for *when prayer begins to be answered, it is only the prelude of some mighty approaching good*;—it thickened with the collecting waters; the wind directed and hastened it towards the parched land of Israel; and over the whole country it burst in blessings, and the famished earth once more brought forth her fruit.” (1 Kings xviii. 41—46.)

But perhaps the most intimate communion with God which Elijah enjoyed, the most glorious manifestation of “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious,” he was ever favoured with, was granted unto him at the rock of Horeb. (1 Kings xix. 11, 12.) To that subject we shall presently refer more at large.

Elijah’s piety was as steady and lasting as it was deep.—He had the same power with God in prayer to the very last moments of his life. Hence, in full confidence of being heard, he said to Elisha just before his removal from earth, “Ask what I shall do for thee, before I

be taken away from thee." (2 Kings ii. 9.) Elisha made his request known, and his request was granted. Elijah's falling mantle shewed, that the last prayer he offered on earth was answered, before he was taken up to heaven.

3. As a teacher, Elijah's *manner was devout*.—This naturally results from genuine piety. Where there is much of the "power of godliness," in the whole exterior conduct will be manifested all the sanctity of its "form." Communion with God produces in the soul feelings of the deepest awe; and, though God may be approached with unshaken confidence, as reconciled through Jesus Christ, yet he who thus approaches him, will ever feel disposed to hide his face, and place his forehead in the dust. We have already observed, in what a devout and reverent manner Elijah worshipped the great and Eternal Jehovah on Mount Carmel, when alone; nor was his manner less reverent or devout when he was publicly engaged in the service of the Lord. It was probably owing to his uniform piety, as discoverable in his method of conducting the worship of the Lord, or of performing any religious act, that he was so generally designated by the appellation, "Man of God." It does not seem to have been given to him as a term of reproach, if we except one instance, (2 Kings i. 9, 10,) but as an acknowledgment of excellence, and of more than ordinary worth. It was an appellation, seldom, if ever, given to the ordinary teachers of religion. Hence it was that good Obadiah had such a reverence for the prophet; and that wicked Ahab, and even all the prophets of Baal were awed at his presence. His manner was not like the manner of other men. They

had never seen any one besides, with such devotion lift up his hands unto God in the heavens, or bless the people in the name of the Lord.

4. *His address was powerful and commanding.*—The public discourses of the prophet are not left on record ; but the Evangelist Luke speaks of the “power of Elias.” (Luke i. 17.) And if we are to judge from the effects that followed his ministrations, his word was with power indeed. In his teaching there was no lack of unction. One account only of his public ministry has been preserved, and that account is full of instruction. The prophet seems to have had a peculiar talent for addressing searching and powerful words to the conscience ; words that carried an irresistible conviction of the truth and importance of the subject he discussed, and that made the transgressors of the divine law, overwhelmed with shame, to become their own judges, and pronounce a sentence of condemnation against their own souls. See Israel assembled on Carmel. With what authority did the prophet cry in the ears of the people, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him ; but if Baal, then follow him.” The words were “like a hammer ;” they smote the heart suddenly and irresistibly ; and the people were so convinced, and confounded, that, amongst all that vast concourse, not one was found who “answered him a word.” (1 Kings xviii. 21.) Thus did he, by “a manifestation of the truth, commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

5. *His success was extraordinary.*—It has been already observed, that, at the close of the contest with the priests of Baal, and in answer to the prophet’s prayer, the hearts of the sons of Israel were once more turned

unto the Lord. And that a great and general change was produced, is evident from the words of the Evangelist concerning John the Baptist: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to [or together with] the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke i. 16, 17.)—Such a multitude of the children of Israel did the prophet turn from idolatry,—both old men and young, the fathers together with the sons,—that they all with one consent acknowledged Jehovah to be the God. And though, in after times of degeneracy, many of them did perhaps backslide again from the Most High, yet it is highly probable that great numbers who on that day renounced the Baals, and made choice of Jehovah for their God, adhered to him, and to his service all the days of their life.

It is true, the prophet subsequently complained, "I, I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." (1 Kings xix. 10—14.) But perhaps he did not mean, that he was *the only individual* who worshipped the God of Israel; but *the only prophet*, or public teacher of religion, remaining. Obadiah had informed him, that on a former occasion, when Jezebel had cut off the prophets of the Lord, he had "hid a hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and had fed them with bread and water." (1 Kings xix. 13.) But it is not improbable, that Jezebel's rage at the recent slaughter of the prophets of Baal, (1 Kings xviii. 40,) and at the escape of Elijah, (1 Kings xix. 2, 3,) had excited her to a stricter search after the prophets of Jehovah, which might have led to a discovery of those prophets whom

Obadiah had concealed, and to their utter extermination. Hence Elijah, being the last of Jehovah's prophets remaining, made before God the lamentable complaint: "Thy prophets are slain with the sword; and I, I only am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings xix. 10—14.) To encourage him in the midst of his deep affliction for the loss of the prophets, may have been one reason why God immediately commanded him to anoint young Elisha to the prophetic office; God thereby shewing, that he can make new labourers, if he suffer old ones to be gathered home to rest by bloody persecutors. And to give him still further consolation, the answer of God said unto him, "*Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*" (1 Kings xix. 18; and Rom. xi. 4.)—Is it not highly probable, that a great portion of those seven thousand men were the prophet's own spiritual children, though he knew them not? And doubtless his zeal for God, of which they heard more than they witnessed, was a great means of confirming them in piety, and, in those perilous times, of establishing them in the fear of God.

Elijah then was exceedingly useful to his own countrymen. He was useful also to the Heathen mingled amongst the Jews; especially while residing at Zarephath, though the extent of his success is not preserved from oblivion on this side of eternity. He was useful to Elisha in training him to be his successor. He was useful to those young men in Judea who were in the schools of the prophets, which he visited before his translation. And, by the record of his life and labours which is preserved in the sacred volume, he has been

rendered useful to all succeeding generations, and will continue to be so down to the latest age of the world. If all these particulars be duly considered, we shall be convinced, that as Elijah's abilities for the ministerial office, whether we regard his principles, his piety, his manner, or his address, were very great; so also was his success both extraordinary and lasting. Thus far Elijah's life contains a model worthy of our imitation. But, in the truths that follow, it would be useless to hold him up for an example, seeing that we are not placed in circumstances at all similar, nor have we it in our power to perform the like actions.

III. His Actions as a Prophet.

I do not mean those actions of his that were ordinary, and within his own power from day to day, as rebuking, instructing, and exhorting the people; but those that were extraordinary and miraculous, and so were manifestly not so much his own acts, as the immediate acts of God. As a prophet his extraordinary actions were of three kinds—Judicial, Salutary, and Figurative.

1. Some of the prophet's actions were *judicial*,—as the withholding of the rain from heaven by earnest prayer, on which particular we have already enlarged.—A second judicial act we have in that remarkable instance, Elijah's commanding the prophets of Baal to be slain: “And Elijah said unto them, *Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape.* And they took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.” (1 Kings xviii. 40.) There can be no doubt of the prophet's having been especially directed by the Spirit of God to give such a command to the Israelites. The whole of the preceding history, and of that

which immediately follows, shews him to have been quite free from every sinful passion, and that he was wholly under the guidance of the inspiration of the Almighty. The prophets of Baal undoubtedly deserved death, not so much for their past wickedness in teaching the people to worship idols, (though in that respect their sin was exceedingly great,) as for their present obstinacy, and incorrigible impenitence; their determination not to be converted themselves, nor to suffer the good work begun amongst the Israelites long to remain. These priests of Baal had cried aloud from morning until noon, "O Baal, hear us!" And from mid-day till the Jewish hour of offering the evening sacrifice, they had mangled their bodies, and most violently intreated an exertion of the power of their God: And yet there was "no voice, nor any answer, nor any that regarded." They had been witnesses themselves, every man of them for himself, to Elijah's reproofs, and expostulations, and devotions, and offering. Their own ears had heard him pour forth the mighty prayer:—"O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word! Hear me, O Lord! hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again!" (1 Kings xviii. 36, 27.) Their own eyes had seen the astonishing answer, at the very time of Elijah's pouring forth his supplications: "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." (1 Kings xviii. 38.) But they were unmoved. Convinced they must have been: Converted they would not be. Therefore they joined

not in the act of adoration: "When all the people saw it, [the descending fire,] they [all the people] fell on their faces;" but the prophets of Baal scorned to prostrate themselves, though they were the guiltiest of all: "And all the people said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God;" but the prophets of Baal would not acknowledge him, nor give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. (1 Kings xviii. 39.) "Their heart was waxed gross, and their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes they closed; lest at that time of gracious visitation, when even they might have known the things belonging to their peace, they should have seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears, and should have understood with their heart, and should have been converted, and the God of Israel should have healed them." (Matt. xiii. 15.) Think then what would have been the consequence, if those incorrigible servants of the devil had been spared. They would have laboured with increased zeal and malignity to oppose the reformation begun in the land; and would have been the means of bringing down heavier judgments on the kingdom, than the one that was now about to be removed. To check therefore the beginning of a plague, the symptoms of which were manifest in their hostile disposition, it was necessary that these prophets of Baal should be slain. Instant judgment was requisite, or Jezebel would have screened them all; and none would have had the courage to execute that judgment, unless Elijah had given them authority in the name of the Lord; nor even then probably would any one have dared to lay hands on the offenders, unless the prophet had remained with them, and, by his own presence, had encouraged them to "root out those evil-doers from the land." Yet we

are not to suppose, that their death was effected in a tumultuous manner. Ahab the monarch was present, the great patronizer of Baal, and of the idolatrous priests. Had the people been tumultuous, he would not have escaped with his life, especially considering the deep miseries the Israelites must have suffered by so long a drought, and since he was the known personal enemy of Elijah, whom Israel, at this sudden revolution of feeling, exceedingly revered and almost adored. But neither Elijah, nor the people, uttered one disrespectful word respecting "the anointed of the Lord." There were undoubtedly many of the elders of Israel present, in such a vast concourse as was then assembled; the elders of Israel, even after the monarchical form of government was introduced, were the natural guardians of the law, —a principle that was acknowledged, and acted upon, even by Jezebel; (1 Kings xxi. 8—11;)—they would now naturally consent to the death of those idolatrous priests, since their own hearts had been turned to own Jehovah as their God. Those priests therefore were dealt with in justice, and according to the law of the land, which was indeed the law of God; only justice was executed speedily, that the guilty might have no opportunity of escaping.

On this occasion then, that God by whom "kings reign, and princes decree justice," constituted Elijah a righteous judge; and invested him, for a season, with the same official authority and power which he gave unto Moses for the space of forty years. When the Israelites had sinned in making the golden calf, Moses commanded the comparatively few to be slain, wheresoever found, who were so guilty as still to continue rioting in the camp, even after he had descended from the mount, that he

might preserve the multitude from being emboldened, by the example of their sinning with impunity, to relapse into that idolatry which he knew would bring down a general curse upon them all: So, here, Elijah commanded the four hundred and fifty vile prophets of Baal to be exterminated, who, probably were degenerate Israelites, rather than, by suffering them to live, to expose the whole nation to the danger of greater crime, and more fearful tokens of the wrath of Almighty God. Nay, until the prophets of Baal were slain, Elijah could not prevail with God for a removal of the dearth which was then afflicting the land: So that, if their lives had been spared, the whole nation must have perished by famine. But no sooner were they all slain at the brook Kishon, than Elijah was directed to say unto Ahab, "Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." (1 Kings xviii. 41.)

There remains another judicial act of the prophet to be considered, his causing the fire to come down from heaven, and to consume the captains, and their two successive companies of fifty men, who were sent to apprehend him. (2 Kings i.) If we would understand this part of sacred history, and obviate every objection, it is necessary to reflect upon, not merely the insulated fact of destroying those men's lives, but on the *action in connection with all its attendant circumstances*. Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, was now on the throne of Israel. He was an idolater; a worshipper of the Baals. Being afflicted, he sent messengers to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, saying, "*Shall I recover of this disease?*" The angel Jehovah bade Elijah meet the messengers and say unto them, "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?"

Now therefore thus saith Jehovah, *Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.*" (2 Kings i. 3, 4.) After delivering this message, Elijah departed. The messengers having carried back these tidings from Elijah to the king, the king in his anger sent two successive companies to apprehend him, with the design to put him to death. That the prophet's death was designed, is apparent from the direction he received when the third captain came with his fifty: "The angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, *Go down with him: Be not afraid of him.*" (2 Kings i. 15.) Such being the design of the king, the captain of each fifty ought to have withstood the commands of his lawful prince, because they were contrary to the righteous laws of God, rather than have eagerly embraced an opportunity of intentionally becoming accessory to the death of so eminent a servant of the Most High. If it is an unquestionable duty to be subject to all lawful commands "for conscience sake;" *for conscience sake also* it becomes an imperious duty to refuse the work of a murderous persecutor, from whomsoever such command may emanate. The righteous providence of God, therefore, brought these men to a summary death, at the very time they were seeking to deliver over Elijah to their king, and to destruction. Each company was sent with the same message, "*Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.*" (2 Kings i. 9.) Only the second, who appears to have been sent before intelligence had been received of the sad catastrophe which had happened to the first, was rather more vehement, or urgent, the king being impatient of delay—"O man of God, thus hath the king said, *Come down quickly.*" (2 Kings i. 11.) These words being put in the mouth

of each messenger, we may suppose the appellation "man of God," was sneeringly used by the infidel and idolatrous monarch and his courtiers, who would fain attempt to disparage the remembrance of Elijah's former memorable actions, at mount Carmel, so as to bring the nation to doubt those facts; for while they were universally admitted as true, the remaining priests of Baal must have had hard work to maintain his worship, and to keep the people to the practice of that corrupt religion. Now the king and the court being idolatrous, none but idolaters would be promoted, especially as the priests of Baal had considerable influence over the king. Whence it follows as extremely probable, that the captain of each of the fifties, and his men, were all idolaters; they being a part of his own guards, in constant attendance upon him. Accordingly these men came to Elijah, and delivered the message *in the same spirit in which it was given*. Full of indignation against him for having slain the prophets of their gods, and glad of an opportunity of being revenged on him, in a taunting and insulting manner, and pretending to disbelieve the miracle of fire falling from heaven in answer to his prayer, they thus accosted him:—"Thou man of God, the king hath said, *Come down.*" And Elijah replied—"If I be a man of God"—if I am *in reality* what you have denominated me *in ridicule*,—if the former miraculous interposition of the God of Israel, in proving himself to be Jehovah, and the answerer of prayer, by sending fire from heaven, were *real*, and *no pretence*,—let the miracle be repeated, with the awful, undeniable proofs of its reality:—"Let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.—And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty." (2 Kings i. 10, 12.) God could

have sent fire from heaven without the intervention of the prophet, without his uttering a single word. But the judgment of God would then have been less marked and striking. Those scoffers did not directly sneer at Jehovah, or deny his power to send fire from heaven ; but at Elijah his servant, who had pretended to bring fire from heaven by prayer unto Jehovah. God therefore vindicated his own honour as the hearer of prayer, and the honour of his chosen servant who was so dear unto him, by suggesting to his mind such words as should be an undeniable demonstration both of his intercourse with God, and of his acquiescence in the divine judgments towards the ungodly. Thus was there a correspondence between their punishment and their sin, which is generally the case in all those providences in which God designs to shew himself to be a judge in the earth.

The evangelist Luke refers to this portion of Elijah's history. (Luke ix. 51—56.) When our Lord's disciples, James and John, saw that the Samaritans, through the influence of their national prejudices, were not willing to receive him into one of their villages, because "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem," they said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?"—A plain proof that until men have so far received "the Spirit of truth, as to be led into all truth ;" until they have so abundantly received "an unction from the Holy One, as to know, or understand, all things" that are written in the scriptures ; through the natural darkness of the human mind, they will be in danger of "wresting those scriptures to their own destruction," or to the destruction of their fellow men. The Saviour,

therefore, justly “rebuked them;”—“turned and rebuked them;”—rebuked them by his looks as well as by the verbal reproof,—“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” They had recently been with the Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration, and seen his glory. There Moses and Elijah appeared unto Christ; the disciples saw, and knew them. (Luke ix. 28—36.) As yet they were not able to bear much honour either from God or man. It puffed them up with self importance; and they were ready to dispute with each other “who among them should be the greatest.” (Luke ix. 46.) Therefore, under the influence of pride and anger, which the cold neglect of the Samaritans awakened, and, on account of the late manifestation on the mount, considering themselves to be equal to Elias whom they had seen there, they were desirous, not indeed of simply committing their cause to God as Elijah did, but, as though the elements were subject to their controul, of “commanding fire to come down from heaven!” How necessary then was the Saviour’s reproof! And if Elijah had been of the spirit, which the disciples had displayed on that occasion, and on others also before the their Pentecostal baptism, God would not have honoured him so signally as he did, by preserving him, and consuming those who sought his destruction. The reproof therefore that was given to the disciples, must not be regarded as indirectly glancing at the spirit by which the prophet was actuated, since the God of Israel who suggested to his mind the words,—“Let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty”—words which denote an acquiescence in a necessary judgment, which he saw just at hand, rather than a request that it might come; and which acquiescence may, consistently with deep piety, may be expressed in view of a foreseen

unavoidable judgment, as well as after that judgment is past:—The God of Israel, I say, who suggested to Elijah's mind those words, was no other than the Son of man who then rebuked the disciples, and who was then come, "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." But after he was risen again from the dead, and the Jews had filled up the measure of their iniquities, he inspired John to write of his coming in the way of righteous judgment—"Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." And the God of Elijah taught John—the same John who would have called fire from heaven, but who now was actuated by quite another spirit, and who was now *all love*,—even him the God of Elijah taught to say in view of the most awful judgments, "Even so, Amen!" (Rev. i. 7.)—Elijah also uttered his Amen, and then "the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed the captains of the fifties, and their men." But the third captain, and his fifty, who feared because of the righteous judgments of God, were spared; and as they were not found fighting against God, not a hair of their head was permitted to perish.

Thus we have considered at some length the judicial actions of this man of God, and have seen that not one of them is in the least derogatory to the high and holy character he sustained, or the sacred office he was called to fill.

2. Some of the prophet's extraordinary actions were *salutary*. As for instance, the multiplying of the widow's barrel of meal; the raising of her son to life; and the obtaining of rain from heaven by prayer. And even those acts that were judicial and severe towards

individuals, were, in their results, salutary towards multitudes, and calculated, and designed, to promote the best interests of men, both in time and in eternity.

3. One of the prophet's extraordinary actions, and that the last, may be regarded as *figurative*. I mean the dividing of Jordan, which may be considered as an emblem that his work was done, and that he was about to receive his inheritance, and enter on his great and eternal reward.

V. His reward AS A SAINT.

The prophet Elijah, more perhaps than any man who was ever called to the public ministry, had been continually exposed to the most imminent peril of his life. His had been, throughout, a dangerous service: And now God, who had spared his life many times as by miracle, was pleased to reward him in a most singular and extraordinary manner. He not only preserved him from dying by the hands of his enemies, but he did not permit him to die at all; he translated him triumphantly from earth to Heaven.

1. God made known his design unto Elijah, previous to that translation: And I conceive the period when that design was made known to Elijah, was while he was waiting upon God at the rock of Horeb; (1 Kings xix. 9—14;) that is, according to the received chronology, four years after he had commenced his public labours, and ten years before his removal home to God.

If we refer to the history of God's dealings with those who, in various ages of the world, have been pre-eminently his servants, we shall find that it has pleased the Divine Being, graciously to reward them with some

special manifestation of his favour, accompanied with some clearer intimations of his future designs, after they have, in obedience to his command, displayed more than ordinary zeal for his glory, or have been exposed to imminent danger on account of their fidelity in his service. When Abram had generously rescued Lot, without regarding the consequences that might have resulted to himself from the surrounding nations, the word of the Lord came unto him in a vision saying, "*Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward:*" And then was it made known unto him that one who "should come forth out of his own bowels, should be his heir." (Gen. xv. 1—6.) And when he had intentionally offered up his son Isaac, God was pleased to enlarge his promises, and to confirm them by an oath, saying, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: Because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. xxii. 17, 18.) It was likewise just after Moses, the Lawgiver of Israel, had executed judgment, and by his holy zeal for God, in cutting off three thousand of the obstinately guilty, had saved the whole camp from destruction, that God gave unto him that peculiarly gracious manifestation, in which he proclaimed himself to be "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." (See Exod. xxxii. to xxxiv. 1—8.)—Now Elijah, like Moses, had manifested his zeal for God in judicially cutting off the prophets of Baal, at the hazard of his own life, as is plain from the threatening of Jezebel: (1 Kings xix. 2:) And as Elijah, immediately after that action, retired into the wilderness to Horeb, the very spot where Moses stood while Jehovah passed by, is it not highly probable, that God, "who reward-

eth his servants according to their works," did there, on that occasion, reveal to Elijah, not only that he should not die by the hand of Jezebel, but that he should be translated to the kingdom of glory?

The prophet evidently undertook that journey, in obedience to the special direction of God. Were it necessary, this might be argued as probable, on the ground of his having been in every previous part of his life under the constant guidance of the providence and Spirit of God. If it were by God himself that he was formerly sent to Cherith, and afterwards to the widow at Zarephath, and at the end of the drought to Ahab, and to Mount Carmel; may we not reasonably infer, that God now sent him into the wilderness to the rock Horeb? Especially if we consider, that this journey was a most extraordinary undertaking, for which the prophet was wholly unprepared, and in the performing of which, being solitary and alone, and without the attendance of even his servant, he would be continually exposed to innumerable privations, and the utmost perils? But we have more than inference on this matter. That God sent Elijah thither, is plain from the circumstances of his having received a miraculous supply of food; from the language of the angel when he appeared the second time, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee;" and from his having been miraculously strengthened to travel, and to remain without food, after that period, forty days and forty nights, even until he came to the mount of God. (1 Kings xix. 5—8.) As God himself sent him to that sacred spot, at that time when his trials and dangers had come to a crisis, and as such remarkable and miraculous circumstances attended his journeying, may we

not conclude with a moral certainty that God designed to afford him some extraordinary manifestation of his presence, and a revelation of his future designs of bestowing on his servant the singular reward of a translation to Heaven?

As the prophet undertook that journey by divine direction, so he seems likewise to have been specially prepared for a manifestation of God's presence, and for a revelation of his will. A large measure of divine influence rested upon him, tranquillizing all the powers of his soul. That he might enjoy communion with God, and uninterrupted meditation on his law, he had "left his servant at Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah," (for Jezebel's threatening and fury had caused him to retire beyond the limits of the kingdom of Israel,) while he "himself went a day's journey into the wilderness." (1 Kings xix. 2—4.) And while sitting there alone "under a juniper tree," he seems to have been in a blessed, holy, heavenly, happy frame of mind. He "requested for himself that he might die;" he felt a longing "desire to depart and be with Christ, which was far better" than to remain on earth. He had no desire for a pompous funeral, nor for any persons who might be disposed to panegyryze his name, and to be present as eye-witnesses of his peaceful end; but there in the wilderness, unseen, unknown, he desired to glide unto his Paradise, and enter without delay into the immediate presence of his God. "And he said, It is enough." This scripture phrase does not necessarily imply dissatisfaction, or discontent of mind; on the contrary, it is often used to express the highest degree of satisfaction and enjoyment. So good old Israel, when he heard that Joseph was ruler over Egypt, with

heart-felt satisfaction exclaimed, "It is enough!" My highest wishes are satisfied; I have not a desire remaining, save only to see him with mine eyes. "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." (Gen. xlv. 28.) In like manner the prophet used the phrase. He was now "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord." He therefore cried out, "It is enough," I am filled on earth: "Now, O Lord, take away my life:" עַתָּה יְהוָה קַח נַפְשִׁי: Now, O Jehovah, receive my soul: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of truth." (Psalm xxxi. 5.) And overwhelmed with a sense of the divine goodness, as David was when he exclaimed, "What am I, O Lord? and what my father's house?" the prophet acknowledges "I am not better than my fathers;" that is, I am the most unworthy of them all. So mightily did the grace of God humble his soul in that hour, while he was enabled to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, which glory he ardently longed to possess and enjoy. Were not those humbling, melting, peaceful influences of the Spirit of God vouchsafed to prepare him for what God was about to shew him at Horeb? Accordingly, immediately after, when he had fallen asleep, he was directed to undertake the journey.

Having been strengthened in body with food, and much more by "the Spirit's might in the inward man," he travelled on through the waste howling wilderness, his expectations no doubt being highly raised, and his soul deeply engaged with God, in prayer and holy meditation. But what must have been his feelings when he "came to the cave," and "lodged there," and remembered, This is the cleft of the rock where Moses

stood, and here Jehovah passed by, and proclaimed to him The Name;—the name that is above every name, “JEHOVAH JESUS; JEHOVAH, THE WORD, who beareth away iniquity, transgression, and sin.” With what reverential awe, with what holy confidence, and, considering that God had sent him there, with what elevated expectation would he worship in that sacred place! Nor was his expectation disappointed: For having “lodged there” that night, in the morning, (See Exod. xxxiv. 2.) “behold! the word of the Lord,” or The Word JEHOVAH, “came to him, and *he* said unto him,—What doest thou here, Elijah?” (1 Kings xix. 9.) The inquiry in effect was, *What is the gracious design of God in bringing thee to this place?* The prophet replied by avowing his zeal for God, and expressing the grief of his soul for the sin of Israel: “I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: For the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, I only am left; and they seek my life to take it away.” (1 Kings xix. 10.) As though he had said—“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: Let thy loving kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.” (Psalm xl. 9—11.) After this reply, The Eternal Word said unto him, “Go forth, and stand upon the Mount before the Lord.” The prophet went forth: “And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the

mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : And after the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake : And after the earthquake, a fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire." (1 Kings xix. 11, 12.)—The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire ; that is, *the voice of the Lord* was not in them ; it was not heard from the midst of the tempest and the storm : For that the *Lord himself* was in them, is manifest from their having been occasioned by his "passing by." Those awful tokens of the divine presence may have been designed, partly to fill the mind of the prophet with a still deeper reverence of God ; and partly to give an emblem of his own translation ;—to shew him that by "*a whirlwind*" he should be carried up into heaven ; and that in "*a chariot of fire*" he should ascend triumphantly to glory. Nor is it improbable that the mighty sweep of the whirlwind was accompanied by a shaking of the earth, at the period of his translation.—But now at the mountain of God, after the wind, and the earthquake, and the fire were past, there followed "a still small voice:" קול רבמה דקה:—A voice that could only be heard in *the deepest silence* ; and which then did not continue long ; a small, slender sound, dying gently away.—This I apprehend was the moment when God revealed to the prophet his will concerning his translation. Did not the "still small voice" of the Eternal Word, in effect, declare?, "Elijah ! thou shall not die, as those hast requested ; (see ver. iv ;) but where I am, there shall my servant be also."—Amazed at so wonderful a revelation of God's sovereign, electing, and distinguishing grace, "it came to pass כִּשְׁמַע as soon as he heard he wrapped his face in his

mantle," and prostrating himself on the earth, with the most profound humility he adored and worshipped the Lord his God. When the manifestation of Jehovah's power and presence was wholly past, and the still small voice was heard no more, the prophet seems to have returned again to the cave; and after some time spent in meditation and prayer, perhaps on the morning of the following day, "he went forth" a second time, and "stood in the entering in of the cave." (1 Kings xix. 13.) But no further special manifestation was granted unto him. "The word Jehovah" did not come to him again; but, at this time, only "a voice came unto him" (compare 9th and 13th verse) and said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" intimating that the gracious design for which God had brought him to that place had been answered, and that he might return. Elijah having replied as before, and still continuing to mourn the destitute state of Israel, because the prophets of the Lord had been slain, he was directed to depart, and, on his way, to anoint two men to be future Kings, who should be instruments in the hand of God of "avenging the blood of his servants;"—Hazeal to be King over Syria, and "Jehu the Son of Nimshi to be king over Israel." (1 Kings xix. 15.) After that, he was commanded to anoint Elisha to the prophetic office. And the tenor of his commission concerning Elisha, is expressed in very striking and remarkable words:—"Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel Meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet *in thy room.*" This last expression clearly evinces that Elijah now certainly knew of his removal; and after this period he seems to have been continued on earth, chiefly to prepare Elisha to succeed him in that high office to which he had been

called, and for the duties of which he had been set apart by the holy anointing oil of God.

Upon the whole then we may perhaps rationally conclude, from what has been advanced, in the general tenor of the history, that as Elijah knew of his translation long before that event occurred, so to make him acquainted with it, and fully to prepare him for so honourable, exalted, and distinguished a privilege, was the special design which God had in view, in sending him to the rock of the mountain Horeb, and in graciously meeting with him there :* “For there the Lord commanded the blessing, life for evermore.” (Psalm cxxxiii. 3.)

2. In what manner the saint received his reward—the commanded blessing, is the last thing that remains to be considered. In 2 Kings ii. 1., we read, “And it came to pass *when* the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.” Hence it appears that God had further revealed to Elijah, either at Horeb, or at a subsequent period, *the time, the day* of his removal from earth to heaven : And when that time had arrived, he directed him to the place where he willed his removal to be accomplished. The place was on the Eastern side of Jordan, most likely one of the mountains, since it seems more probable that a cloud would bear him away from a mountain, than take him up from a valley. Thus our

* It may be objected, the prophet still complained, “They seek my life, to take it away.”—That, however, was not the language of fear, the prophet only related the fact. And though God had revealed to him, that he should be translated, it was still his duty to use natural means for preserving his life ; for God did not engage to make his body invulnerable to the sword. Hence Elijah’s caution : (2 Kings i. 4.) “He departed.”

Saviour, when about to ascend on high, went up to the mountain called Olivet; and from thence did he ascend until a cloud received him out of his disciples' sight. And what if the prophet were taken up from Mount Nebo, where Moses died at the word of the Lord!

The memorable day having arrived, Elijah and Elisha went early in the morning to Gilgal, the prophet having to pass through Bethel and Jericho, to visit the schools of the sons of the prophets, to give those youths his final instructions, and his parting benediction. When they came to Gilgal, "Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel." (2 Kings ii. 2.) The request was repeated at Bethel, and at Jericho. Elisha's steady attachment to Elijah, and his zeal for the glory of the God of Israel, had been demonstrated long before this period; by his forsaking his calling the same day Elijah "cast his mantle upon him;" (1 Kings xix. 19—21;) and by his remaining with the prophet up to that hour. The request, therefore, of Elijah was not designed to try Elisha's steadfastness; for if that had been at all doubtful, the prophet must have felt his mind considerably distressed, at the very time he was going to enter on his reward. That request, so earnestly repeated, proceeded from Elijah's deep and unfeigned humility. He who could have joyfully ceased from his labours under a juniper tree in a wilderness, would have preferred to have no one an eye-witness to the singular honour which God was about to bestow upon him: He wished to receive his reward alone, rather than in the presence of even his beloved Elisha. For this reason, he did not tell him why the Lord had sent him beyond Jordan. With his intended successor he might have occasionally con-

versed on the subject of his future translation, that he might be prepared to fill his place, as soon as he should know immediately from God, or have reason in his own mind to conclude, that that event was near its accomplishment; and the transactions which took place at Horeb, between himself and God alone, he probably related to Elisha, through whom they have been transmitted to us in the sacred records. But the time of his removal he seems to have studiously concealed from Elisha, up to the very day when his translation occurred. God, however, revealed it to Elisha; for which reason, he could not bring himself to comply with the request of his venerated father, by tarrying at Gilgal, or at Bethel, or at Jericho: "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." (2 Kings ii 2, 4, 6.)

That Elijah should be translated that day, was also revealed to the sons of the prophets at each of those places; God designing, by communicating that knowledge to their minds, to dispose them to pay the utmost attention to Elijah's last charge, that they might all receive such lasting good as would fit them for eminent usefulness, when called to the service of the sanctuary. Hence they came to Elisha with the eager inquiry, "Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head to-day?"—Elisha being well acquainted with the mind of the prophet, and of his aversion to ostentation, and even to a mention of his labours, or reward, when a regard for God's honour did not call for it, gave unto the sons of the prophets successively this prudential answer,—"Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." (2 Kings ii. 3, 5.)

And now the prophet's public work was done. Elijah

and Elisha departed from Jericho; “and they two went on” till they came to Jordan. (2 Kings ii. 6, 7.) Here for some moments they stood. Then “Elijah took off his mantle”—unclothing as it were his mortal body,—and, it seems, put it on no more, that in a moment he might drop it on Elisha—“and, wrapping the mantle together, he smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.” (2 Kings. ii. 8.)

After they had passed the Jordan, Elijah, finding that he could no longer conceal from Elisha, that the time of his departure was at hand, said unto him, “Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.” O what a privilege to have an interest in the last supplications of so eminent a saint of God!—Elisha replied, “I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.” Or rather the words—*וידו-נא פי-שנים ברוחך עלי*—should be rendered. “Let a double portion, I pray thee, *with thy Spirit*, be upon me.” No one surely can suppose, that Elisha desired to be vastly superior to Elijah in prophetic eminence. This notion is contrary to that modesty which belonged to Elisha on such an occasion, and to those exalted ideas of Elijah’s character which he had long entertained. But he asks, as Elijah’s first-born, for a “double portion” (See Deut. xxi. 17,) of those blessings, and ordinary gifts, for which he had that day heard Elijah plead with God on behalf of the sons of the prophets; with that extraordinary unction which was necessary to enable him to become Elijah’s successor, and like him to fill the prophetic office to the glory of God. Elisha trembled at the awful responsibility of the office that was about to devolve upon him; and though he had had many instructions and

considerable preparation for it, yet he deeply felt his need of more than ordinary grace;—his need of the same Spirit to rest upon him, by whose power and grace Elijah had been enabled to prove faithful. Therefore he spake with earnestness of soul—“I pray thee, let a double portion, with thy Spirit, be given unto me.”

Elijah replied, “Thou hast asked a hard thing.” This certainly seems a singular reply, after the unlimited permission the prophet had given Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken away from thee.” But the original words, *הקשיה לשאול*, are capable of a more literal translation:—“Thou hast made a difficulty to ask,” or in asking. The verb *הקשיה* shews that the difficulty lay with Elisha, and seems to intimate, what indeed does not appear in the reading of his brief request, but might have been evident in the manner of his uttering it, that he doubted whether so great a blessing as Elijah’s spirit would be given to rest upon him. Elijah, perceiving his doubts, shewed him that the reception of so great a blessing depended on the degree of his faith; that “according to his faith it should be done unto him.” This was the all-important condition. “If,” says he, “thou see me taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.” (2 Kings ii. 10.) That is, If, on this solemn occasion, by a steady, silent, constant exercise of that “faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,” thou waitest on God with a full expectation of being thus endued with power from on high, thy request shall be granted, of which this shall be the outward token,—Thou shalt see, with thy bodily eyes, the manner and circumstances of my removal from thee. Elisha’s heart must have been

deeply affected with a reply, the spirit of which conveyed so much seasonable admonition and instruction to his mind. That conversation passed just on the other side of Jordan, when they had crossed the parted flood.

“And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked.” I must be excused once more for referring to the original; it reads so significantly here, that, without introducing it, I cannot do my best to explain the mind of the Spirit in this passage. It is as follows: הֵלֵךְ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְעִשָׂיָה בְּרֵגֶל וְהָיָה כִּי יֵלְכוּ וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּח וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּח וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּח: “And it came to pass, they were going on, *he* went on, and *he* spake:”—that is, as they were journeying with considerable rapidity, *Elijah quickened his step still more, and hastened on the way*, for he longed to be with God. And as they quickened their pace, *he, Elijah, spoke*: His word now “distilled as the dew.” Elisha was a silent learner, receiving, with peculiar emotions of soul, the last solemn advice and instructions from his venerable father; not forgetting, however, to raise his heart in prayer for that faith, on the exercise of which, at the eventful moment, so much of his future happiness and usefulness depended. The scene must have been affecting beyond what imagination can conceive. And “behold,” suddenly, while Elijah was yet speaking, or had scarcely ended, “there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” (2 Kings ii. 11.)—Clouds hastened on by wind, in which attendant angels rode, suddenly assumed the triumphant and majestic appearance of “a chariot of fire, and horses of fire,” and bore the prophet from the presence of Elisha, to the presence of Elisha’s God. But “Elisha saw,” says the text. The translation was sud-

den ; but, his faith being in lively exercise, he was favoured with a sight of it. “ And he cried ;” *קרא* “ *cried out aloud,*” in deep amazement and concern—with rapidity—in broken sentences, “ My Father ! My Father ! Chariot of Israel ! and his horsemen !”—It is manifest, the prophet saw other beings beside Elijah. He saw the chariot of the God of Israel ; and the angels, his ministering spirits, guiding his father’s ascent, and attending him in his triumphant removal to glory.—“ But he saw him no more.”—Elijah’s mantle fell : He dropt it, the moment he was taken away : And when with it Elisha divided Jordan, the sons of the prophets acknowledged Elisha, not as Elijah’s superior, as having a double portion of his spirit ; but as his successor, saying, “ The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha.” (2 Kings ii. 15.) As for Elijah, the moment his mantle fell he was “ changed,” the “ corruptible putting on incorruption, and the mortal putting on immortality ; he was clothed upon with the house which is from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”

In this manner was Elijah, that eminent saint of the Most High, rewarded ; and in a most literal sense did he experience the truth of the Redeemer’s declaration—“ He that will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” And while “ the bloody and deceitful” priests of Baal, did not “ live out half their days ;” and while Ahab perished in battle, and the dogs licked his blood as his chariot was washed in the pool at Samaria ; and while Jezebel met with a violent death, and the dogs devoured her carcase also ;—God both preserved the life of Elijah in the midst of the most imminent and constant dangers, and at the last rewarded him with a most signally “ triumphant and abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—

“ Verily there is a reward for the righteous: Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.” (Psalm lviii. 11.)

In concluding this subject, of which we have taken so extensive a view, we shall only dwell a few moments on two leading observations, that arise out of what has been advanced:

1. The translation of Elijah was not only to him a distinguished reward, but it was an event full of lasting instruction to all Israel. It served to confirm the minds of the people in the belief of a future state; and to give them clearer views of the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, and of the future resurrection and immortality of the body. These glorious truths must have been well nigh effaced from the heart, by a prevailing idolatrous worship; for idolatry is the parent of darkness: Where idolatry extends, there “darkness covers the land, and gross darkness the people.” Elijah’s translation was designed to dispel that darkness, and there can be no doubt but that, in many individuals, this end was fully answered. It served also to raise, in the estimation of the people, the prophetic character and office, at a period when every method was used by ungodly rulers, and wicked priests, to bring them into contempt. And thus it gave a confirmation to all those important truths which Elijah had delivered in his ministrations amongst the Israelites; and prepared them to receive with the greater reverence and attention the admonitions of his successor Elisha. Notwithstanding the national wickedness of the ten tribes continued to increase, until the Lord sent them into a captivity from which they have never returned; yet may we reasonably suppose, that the instructive providence was not useless to all;—nor indeed to any, for

it served to leave all more fully "without excuse," while it might have been the means of bringing many individuals to repentance, and to an acknowledging of the truth, that they might be saved. In fine, the history of Elijah, contrasted with the history of his idolatrous and bloody persecutors, proclaimed to all Israel, in language never to be forgotten, these words of the Eternally Righteous Jehovah:—"Them that honour me, I will honour; but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)

2. These things are also written for our example, and the Sacred Record has been preserved for our instruction. We see the amazing long-suffering of God towards sinners. Israel had become corrupt and forsaken the Lord. They began to forsake him by worldly, that is, by sinful policy. Jeroboam made them golden calves, to prevent them from worshipping Jehovah at his own Sacred Temple in Jerusalem. This sin caused their ruin. But how gracious was God toward them! He might have left them to their iniquities; he might have pronounced at once—"Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." But that awful sentence proceeded not from his lips, till every method of detaching them from their idols had been used in vain. By forsaking the temple, they neglected the priests and Levites, who were the ordinary teachers of religion; but God, in the most unbounded compassion, raised them up two of the most extraordinary men that ever lived, and such as could not be equalled in Judah. Where but in guilty and idolatrous Israel, could first an Elijah and then an Elisha be found? What a powerful demonstration that "God is long-suffering to-us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!" Let a recollection of this goodness of God to Israel, lead us to

repentance ; but let us beware of hardening our hearts, lest we fall after the same example of unbelief !

What reason have we to be thankful for a *stated and regularly established ministry of the word*. This is a greater blessing, than to be favoured occasionally with the teaching of even apostles and prophets. Judea, with the priests every where dispersed amongst the people, and the synagogues of God numerous in the land, where the law was read, was far less sinful and guilty than idolatrous Israel, with men of the greatest holiness and zeal, who were mighty both in word and in deed. To enjoy the privilege of sitting under a regular ministry, in the manner we do, is one of the greatest blessings of heaven.

How ought we to adore God for the superior light of the gospel dispensation ! Here "life and immortality are brought to light." Here we read, not only of the translation of an Elijah from earth to heaven, but of the resurrection of the Redeemer from the dead. When he had made atonement for our sins by the blood of his cross ; when he had spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly ; and when he ascended up on high, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them. Yea, he received the gift of the Holy Ghost for us ; that by his divine and gracious influences we might be enlightened, convinced, converted, justified, and sanctified, and be finally glorified in the presence of God. Let us then seek for a present salvation, through the merits of the Redeemer, by the power of the Spirit, that we may rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Finally : All those who are now saved by grace, may behold in Elijah's translation an emblem of their own final glory. It is true, we must die ; but our souls shall

be received into Abraham's bosom, and our flesh shall rest in hope. Precious, in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints. Their very dust is precious in his sight. Of this we have a fine illustration in the case of Elisha. Elisha died and was buried. But, some months afterwards, when his sepulchre was opened, and a corpse lowered into his grave, no sooner did the corpse touch the bones of Elisha, then the "dead man revived, and stood up upon his feet." (2 Kings, xiii. 20, 21.) What was the meaning of this extraordinary miracle? Was it not as though the Redeemer had said—"A saint whose death is precious in my sight lies buried there. *Elisha's very dust is as precious and honourable in my sight, as Elijah's body that is glorified in my kingdom; for hereafter that dust shall be raised, and glorified also.* It is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory: It is sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power: It is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body:—It shall be fashioned—not like Elijah's—but like my own glorious body, according to the working of my mighty power.

Let us then smile at death, and triumph over the grave. We shall have a resurrection, if we have not a translation. Elijah was translated *alone*; but we shall be raised *with myriads* who have slept in Jesus: And instead of "horses of fire and a chariot of fire" sent to convey us home, the "Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;" and with all the living saints, "we shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

May we all be partakers of that glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN!

SERMON V.

ON THE PLEASURES OF SIN.

The Pleasures of Sin for a Season.—HEB. xi. 25.

WOULD we form a just estimate of the pleasures of religion, we must carry our thoughts into eternity. "Pure and undefiled religion" not only contains within itself a source of lasting enjoyment on earth, it also leads us ultimately into the immediate presence of God, where "there is fulness of joy," and exalts us to "his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore."

But when we reflect on "the pleasures of sin," we must confine our thoughts within narrower limits: They end with the momentary life of man; they are only "for a season."

To describe the pleasures of sin, at first view appears an exceedingly difficult task. The very phrase seems to stand opposed to the general tenor of holy writ, and to be contrary to the universal experience of mankind. Of the miseries produced by sin we have heard much; those miseries we have often felt, and acknowledged, and lamented. "By one man sin entered into the world." "Man is born to trouble." "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."—Where then shall we look for *the pleasures* of sin?

The context will afford an easy illustration of so strange an expression: "By faith Moses when he was come to years refused to be called *the son of Pharaoh's daughter*; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."—By "the pleasures of sin," we perceive, the apostle meant *those voluptuous and sensual delights which are agreeable to the desires of men in a carnal, unregenerate state*; the pleasures which might be enjoyed in the court of Egypt, and which are too common in the courts of princes of every nation.

But it is not in courts only, and in the mansions of the great, that these pleasures are pursued with avidity; we daily observe a similar conduct in those who hold a middle station in society, and in those who are poor,—though perhaps in an inferior degree. Practical atheism every where abounds. "They are all gone out of the way." All are seeking happiness out of God. Every one pursues the phantom of his own imagination; and the summit of his wishes is, to be left alone, peacefully to the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin. The justness of this charge I hope to establish, in such a manner as shall bring home the word with power to your consciences, while I proceed

I. To enumerate *the Pleasures of Sin*:

II. To prove that the pleasures so enumerated are, in reality, *sinful pleasures*: And,

III. To point out *the shortness of their duration*.

I. We are to enumerate *the Pleasures of Sin*.

1. I begin with the pleasures of **WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS**.—Behold yon thickening throng crowding along the road, and hastening to the distant plain! Whither are they going? For what purpose are they collecting together? Why, to spend some gay hours in witnessing the speed of horses, and the cruelty of man. Noble entertainment for an immortal mind! O ye angels of light! do ye not envy us our sublime pleasures on earth?—See that select company, all cheerful and gay, met together to spend a few social hours in each other's society. While that busy member, the tongue, talks of every thing but wisdom; how eager, how deeply intent they are, on the business of throwing down and taking up again a few spotted cards, that were first invented to please an idiot king!—Behold that youthful party, convened to spend the evening in dancing till the midnight hour: What pleasure do they appear to feel in each other's presence! What joy irradiates every countenance! How do they strive to manifest “the warm efforts of the friendly heart, anxious to please!” Every desire seems to be satisfied, one only excepted, which occasionally arises, “O that these pleasures would longer last, or oftener return!”—Next observe those young men, whose friendship was formed in childhood, and whose affectionate attachment has increased by some years' acquaintance, and by many reciprocal acts of kindness. They are going to the ale-house, or to the tavern; those haunts of wickedness, and nurseries of every vice. At first, perhaps, they only design to learn the news of the day, and mutually agree that they will be on their guard against all bad habits, and every kind of immorality. But evil steals upon them gradually and imperceptibly: They form new acquaintances, enter

into new connections, and, still in the pursuit of pleasure, fall into practices which deeply wound their domestic comfort, injure their character, and stain the reputation of their friends. At length they become rivetted to the places, to which at the outset they only resorted to spend the evening, and can never be happy but when there.

The scene, my brethren, is endlessly diversified; so numerous are the amusements invented by the ingenuity of man to *kill time*, and to make him happy by banishing from his mind a recollection of his own mortality: "Lo, this one thing only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions."

2. We next bring forth to view, the pleasures of **INTEMPERANCE**.—By the pleasures of intemperance, I mean that delight which men take in eating and drinking to excess. The intemperate man has a two-fold pleasure; one in prospect, when he feeds his imagination with the anticipation of that delight he expects to find at the festal board; and the other in enjoyment, when he sits down to partake of those exquisite dainties with which the table groans. It is indeed almost an abuse of words to call his feelings "happiness;" and were it not a fact, that too many make "their belly their god," and say to themselves like one of old, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," the term should never be so applied. They have returned *in heart* to the ancient superstitions of the Egyptians; for while they would scorn to bow the knee to an idol, their grovelling souls stoop lower still; and, slaves to appetite, they worship the food they eat. Hence it is that, in the

early part of the day, they feel dejection of mind, and complain of lowness of spirits; and the melancholy hangs about them until they take the cheering glass, and banish dull care from their minds. And now they seem to be happy! The spirits are enlivened; the gloom has wholly disappeared; anxieties are lost in forgetfulness; reason is dethroned, or the exercise of that faculty is in part suspended; and the countenance appears cheerful and glad, as though sorrow had never been known in the heart at all. Such are the pleasures of intemperance! and they are generally accompanied with

3. The pleasures of MIRTH.—“Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure.” (Eccles. ii. 1.) Music’s charms are called for, to keep composed the restless passions of the soul. “The harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts.” (Isaiah v. 12.) The powers of harmony are tried. The soft sound of melody, and the loud chorus that rends the air, alternately excite delightful feelings in the mind. Some delight in singing the merry song, of which the mighty achievements of men called “heroes” are the leading theme. The heroes, joined with Bacchus, are their gods. Alas! some stoop lower, and while “wine inflames them,” appear to be possessed of a legion of unclean spirits; and their “excess of wine” is attended with “lasciviousness, lusts, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.” (1 Peter iv. 3.)—There are various degrees of excesses, but all pretend to be happy in them. They are throwing off restraint; and “walking in the imagination of their own heart,” that they may “bless themselves,” and take their fill of pleasure. Hear the loud laughter bursting forth from

every quarter, and oft-times repeated, and say, Are not the pleasures of mirth worthy of being desired? Why should a man make himself *a mope*, all his days? Why should the poor melancholy wretch be continually prying into his Bible, till he becomes stupid and unfit for society, and capable of attending to nothing but his prayers?—Let fools attend to nothing else but religion. Religion is very well in its place; but Solomon tells us, “There’s a time for all things.” We will enjoy life while we have it; and take no thought for to-morrow. Come: “Let us eat, and drink, for to-morrow we die.”—Such sentiments appear very rational to the world; and he who holds them, is sure to gain the esteem of the world. To his other enjoyments he may then add,

4. The pleasures of HUMAN APPLAUSE. Flattery is pleasing to human nature; and nothing sooner awakens the wrath of an unconverted man than reproach. And especially he has an aversion to being thought “righteous over much.” He has no fixed principles by which his conduct is regulated, but with much urbanity and good nature he endeavours to conform to custom, in every society and in every place; and if, in any instance, scruples of conscience make him dissent from custom, he is careful so to contrive it, and by many excuses so to cover the real cause of his dissent, that no one may have the least suspicion of his having too much religion. Thus while he is swimming with the stream, the stream glides smoothly along; and throughout life he passes for an agreeable, honest, well-meaning man. He has the good-will of his neighbours. Every one commends him. Numerous friends strive to help him forward in life; and he enjoys ease, comfort, and prosperity. The

reproach he shunned never comes upon him ; he dies as he lived, applauded and honoured of men ; and his virtues are inscribed on the monumental stone which covers him in the grave. How agreeable is all this to the natural feelings of the human mind ! Could it be obtained and enjoyed without the sacrifice of any Christian principle, who would not desire it ? But that applause of man which comes by shunning the reproach of Christ, and which is only secured by walking “ according to the course of this world,” must be numbered amongst the pleasures of sin.

5. There are the pleasures also of SELF-ESTEEM. — If man cannot always, after all his care, obtain honour from his fellow-men, he can at least obtain it from himself. If all the world be blind to the excellencies that adorn his character, to himself they may appear in the most brilliant colours ; and cause him to feel his own importance in the scale of society. Some who have but little merit of their own, highly value themselves on account of the acknowledged worth of their ancestors, from whom they are descended. Others esteem themselves because of their affluence, the large estate which they have acquired, and the wealth they are enabled to display. One of their highest pleasures consists in secretly saying to their own hearts, if not outwardly to others : “ This noble mansion is *mine* ; and those fields and gardens are *my* inheritance.” Some value themselves highly on account of their beauty ; others because of their bodily strength, or stature ; and not a few because of the splendour of their garments, and the profusion of costly ornaments which their circumstances enable them to wear. No matter how trifling the thing which produces delight ; no one can deny, that a vain

mind finds a kind of pleasure in its vanity. The vain covet the universal and indiscriminate esteem of men ; and always esteem themselves.

The pleasures then of which we have now spoken, are the pleasures described in the text. That they are pleasures, that there is enjoyment to be found in some or all of them, you are ready to admit : But, that *they are all the pleasures of sin*, you are disposed to deny, since *some* of them at least are quite harmless ; especially the amusements described, and ought rather to be called *innocent* recreations. Here we join issue. I am in the next place,

II. To prove that the pleasures now enumerated are all *the pleasures of sin*.

They are sinful ; because they have no reference to God's glory ; because they are contrary to God's word ; and because they unfit us for the enjoyment of God in heaven.—If I make good these three arguments, the point I wish to prove must be clearly established ; and, by whatever name those pleasures may be called by those who love them, it will be demonstrated that they are in reality *the pleasures of sin*.

1. *They have no reference to God's glory.*

I take it for granted that you all allow, that God's glory is the end for which man was created. Wherefore did God originally make man in his own image, and communicate to him his own immortality, and endue him with such vast and noble faculties, and exalt him to so much honour and dignity,—but that he might shadow forth his Maker's perfections, in the constant purity and holiness of all his actions ? God made the world for man, as well as to display his own creative glory :

But man he made for himself alone. The world was designed to be the abode of man, and man the abode of God: The purposes of creation and redemption are the same. When man was fallen by his own iniquity, the Lord "laid help upon one who is mighty to save." "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all:" We are redeemed by the blood of Christ. But wherefore redeemed? "That henceforth we should not live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again." "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price: *Therefore glorify God* in your body and in your spirit which are God's,"—that is, to the uttermost, with all your ransomed powers. And as to the instances in which this is our duty, and our privilege, and our happiness, we are thus directed by St. Paul,—“Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, *do all* to the glory of God.” His glory, therefore, is to be the end, not only of our religious actions, but of our common actions and pursuits throughout the whole tenor of our life; by which means our common actions would become sacred, and our every deed rewardable in eternity; and then would the prayer we have so often offered up be fully answered, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” But are you doing the will of God on earth in following the pleasures of the world? Do any of those amusements that have been mentioned, which you call “harmless and innocent,” promote the glory of God? Or do they promote dissipation of mind, and thus awfully increase the natural atheism of the heart? Which of them will you select as an instance of their rational utility, in enabling you to answer the great purposes of creation and redemption? Is it the theatre, the ball, the masquerade, the race-ground, or the drunkard’s song? Can you

indeed while pursuing those “innocent recreations” solemnly appeal to God and say?, — “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I am not now seeking my own will, but thy glory. Thou knowest that I am now striving to become thy disciple, by denying myself, and taking up my cross that I may follow thee. Thou knowest that I am eagerly performing my baptismal vow, in which I promised to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful desires of the flesh.” Can you thus appeal to God, O ye lovers of pleasure, in the midst of any one of your amusements? You dare not. You cannot say, “God made me thus to live;” or, that “I might enjoy such a pleasure, of which I am particularly fond, was the great end for which Christ died upon the cross.” What! Did he bathe the earth with his bloody sweat in the garden of Gethsemane, did he exclaim in the deepest anguish of soul on the cross at Calvary—*Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani*, “My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me!” that he might purchase for you the privilege of enjoying worldly pleasures, trifles and vanities? Did he deny himself of all things, that you might be intemperate? Was he “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” that you might indulge in the mirth and laughter of fools? Was he “the Lamb of God without spot;” “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,” that you might have “eyes full of adultery,” and feet running to do evil? Was he “a worm and no man,” a “very scorn of men,” that you might thirst for human applause?....Ah! My brethren, by those pleasures which you call “innocent” you have been the murderers of the Lord’s Christ! You have acted the part of Judas a hundred times; and

have been "the betrayers" as well as the murderers of the Son of God. Behold! In his house you say, "*Hail Master!* and kiss him;" and anon turning your backs upon him, and following your *Mohamedan* pleasures, you "deny the Lord that bought you, that you may bring upon yourselves swift destruction;"—"a damnation that lingereth not." All the mockeries and insults of the Jews towards Christ, when he stood at the bar of Pilate, have been repeated by you times innumerable: You who profess to glory in the name of "Christian!" Behold! Throughout the week you are running after the pleasures of the world, entirely forgetting Christ, and neglecting his salvation; and yet, on the Sabbath,—when indeed that day is not also made a day of pleasure,—you appear in his sanctuary, and cry before him, "Lord, have mercy upon us! Christ, have mercy upon us!" This insulting address, from hearts that never felt their need of mercy, is more shocking than that of the Jews. They only derided him *as man*, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" But you deride him by the sacred names of "Lord and Christ!" Why call him "Lord," if you will not be governed by him? Why acknowledge him as "the Messiah," if you oppose the end for which he was sent, namely, "that he might deliver you from this present evil world, according to the will of God?" Why delude yourselves with the notion, that you are Christians, when you love those pleasures which not only do not promote the glory of God, but which are directly opposed to his glory, seeing they pervert the end for which man was created and redeemed?—The fact is undeniable, those pleasures do not glorify God; therefore they are the pleasures of sin.

2. *They are contrary to the word of God.*

Hear the word of the Lord, ye lovers of worldly amusements! That word declares concerning certain ancient pleasure-takers, that, when they had departed most awfully from God, a natural consequence of that departure from him was,—“the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.” (Exod. xxxii. 6.) “They that live in pleasure,” says St. Paul, “are dead while they live;” (1 Tim. v. 6;) and when he is enumerating sinners of the worst class, he does not forget to mention those who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. iii. 4.) The pleasures of this life choke the good seed of the word when it is sown, so that it cannot bring forth fruit unto perfection. (Luke viii. 14.) “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.” (James iv, 4.)

Hear this, ye lovers of *intemperance and riot!* “It shall come to pass, if any man who heareth the words of the curse,” which Jehovah hath denounced against all transgressors, shall, by the influence of unbelief, “bless himself in his heart, saying, *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst*; the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.” (Deut. xxix. 19, 20.) “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night till wine inflame them. And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts:

But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.”—“Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: Because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah v. 11, 12, 22—24.)—“Belshazzar the King made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. *Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine,* commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. *In that same hour* came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king’s palace: And the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. *In that night* was Belshazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain.” (Dan. v. 1, 2, 5, 6, 30.)—“When Herod’s birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised *with an oath* to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, *Give me here John Baptist’s head in a charger.* And the king was sorry: Nevertheless, for the oath’s sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be

given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison." (Matt. xiv. 6—10.) "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 10.)

Hear this, ye lovers of *mirth*! "Woe unto you that laugh now; for ye shall mourn and weep." (Luke vi. 25.) "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness:" (James iv. 9:)—"Weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you." (James v. 1.) "I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation: And I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head: And I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day." (Amos viii. 10.)

Hear this, ye that dwell in *human applause*! "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke vi. 25.) Christ declares, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 42, 44.)

Hear this, ye *idolizers of self*! "I am the Lord thy God: Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exod. xx. 2, 3.) "God resisteth the proud;" (James iv. 6;) and "*every one* that exalteth himself shall be abased." (Luke xviii. 14.)

From this appeal to "the law and to the testimony," we clearly prove, that all the pleasures which have been enumerated are altogether contrary to the word of God.

3. They unfit us for the enjoyment of God in heaven.

If we cannot enjoy God's presence and blessing while pursuing those pleasures on earth, it necessarily follows that they unfit us for his more immediate presence in

the regions of bliss and glory. I appeal now to your own candour, to your reason as men. Do these pleasures prepare you for the service of God? Do they produce in your soul an earnest desire for prayer and communion with the Father of spirits, that you may live? Do they make you heavenly-minded, spiritual, happy? Happy in afflictions, triumphant in sufferings, and joyous in the prospect of death and eternity? In what respect do they benefit you? Do they make you wiser and more rational men, more useful citizens, more affectionate husbands, more tender parents, more humane masters, more obedient children, more faithful servants? Do they promote, *in the smallest degree*, one Christian principle, one Christian practice; and do they produce an increased "*meekness* for the inheritance of the saints in light?" Do they beget in the soul an ardent "desire to depart and to be with Christ?" In the midst of your innocent diversions, can you lift up your heart, and devoutly pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly?" Could you retire with gladness from the scenes of mirth and dissipation, and exchange your gay attire for a shroud, and meet death disarmed of his sting? Ah! need I press these inquiries, when you are willing to own, that certainly you would not wish to die in that hour when you are engaged in them? But if indeed you make such an admission,—which is a proof that a ray of light from the Eternal Spirit is still shining upon your darkness,—beware how you continue to grieve that Holy Spirit, by "taking your ease," and continuing to "eat, drink, and be merry," lest God should say unto you in an unexpected hour, "Thou fool! this night shall thy soul be required of thee?"

4. I trust these arguments which have been advanced

do fully prove the point I have endeavoured to establish. I know that laying the axe at the root, will expose me to the censure of mortals; but God forbid that, on that account, I should soften the truths of the gospel, or shun to declare the whole counsel of God. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Whatever excuses men may make; however they may attempt to justify the pleasures they love; by whatever soft name they may call them; they are all, at all times, "the pleasures of sin;" and shall last only "for a season." Hence we proceed to point out

III. *The shortness of their duration.*

1. What is human life? What is the longest life that man ever lived? Yea, what is all time when compared with eternity? Suppose that Adam, our great progenitor, had lived from the creation down to the present day, throughout a space of nearly six thousand years; and that, having seen generation after generation pass away, he still continued to enjoy health, and strength, and vigour: Suppose that his existence on earth was still to be continued for ages to come, even until "time should be no more," till the world made for his residence should be burned up with fire: Suppose that, during this lapse of ages, he had been wholly exempt from every kind of afflictions, and enjoyed to the full, without any interruption, all those pleasures which have been described this evening: Still, with the utmost propriety, it might be said, "The Pleasures of Sin are only *for a season.*" He dies; and his pleasures are no more: They are not merely suspended, they come to a perpetual end.

2. But, instead of reflecting on such an *imaginary* life, let us consider one that is *real.* "The *days* of our

years are three-score years and ten ; and if, by reason of strength, they be four-score years, yet is their strength but labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Psalm xc. 10.) Here you have the longest assignable period of human life ; consequently, within the limits of this period, all earthly good must be enjoyed that is within our reach. What a little space ! Man scarcely lives before he dies.

Our birth is nothing but our death begun,
As tapers waste that instant they take fire.

Year after year rolls round ; soon we come to the last, and are hurried to the house appointed for all living. And, even during these uncertain four-score years, we cannot throughout the whole enjoy the Pleasures of Sin. We must break off the two ends of life,—infancy and old age. During infancy and childhood, we know but little ; and in old age, of those very delights which may have been the joy of our life, we are constrained to say, "I have no pleasure in them." (Eccles. xii. 1.) Then, during the middle part of life, from the time of youth to the commencement of old age, a great portion of our days is spent in toil and labour, of body or of mind, so that we "eat our bread in the sweat of our brow ;" several hours of every day are required for rest and sleep ; days and weeks of sorrow are occasioned by losses of a worldly nature ; and other sorrows arise from afflictions, or bereavements of our kindred and friends : So that we meet with disappointment and woe, at every turn. If then we were duly to consider these things, and endeavour to collect together into one period all the moments and hours of pleasure, in which the pleasure is actually enjoyed, throughout a long life, probably the

whole would amount to not more than the space of a single month ! O who that was wise would lose his soul for such short-lived and uncertain pleasures !—"Vanity of vanities ! Vanity of vanities ! All is vanity :"—And at the close of this scene of folly and dissipation, we may read these words, " Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

3. The Pleasures of Sin are, for a season ; but the punishment in which they end is eternal. " When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and all nations shall be gathered before him," where shall the lovers of the world be found ? And when " the books are opened, and the dead small and great are judged out of those things which are written in those books," will their pleasures *then* appear to have been holy, or sinful ? Shall they be entitled to a reward, for having pursued them, from that God who judgeth righteously ? And when " the book of life is opened,"—the book in which is enrolled the names of the sons of God who lived by faith below,—shall the name of any one who " lived in pleasure and was dead," be found in it ? Shall a dead sinner be written amongst the living saints ?—No such anomaly shall appear. But, as the scripture declares, " If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not him ;" Christ will finally disown them. They shall be collected amongst those who stand at the left hand of the judgment-seat, waiting the fearful issue of the scrutiny of that day. Memory will then recover her originally retentive power ; and what has been forgotten throughout life will be recalled, no more to sink into oblivion. One consequence of this will be, that the discourse you are now hearing will rush upon your minds at once ; and my voice,

joined with the recollection of time and place, shall seem to sound in your ears all those denunciations of vengeance, which have been brought forward from the word of God at this hour. Sinners, you shall hear me then; and think of me then; and remember my warnings then; and especially when you come to be individually examined by the Searcher of all hearts. Will you open your mouth and say, "Lord, have pity on us; we are guilty; but we erred through ignorance; we knew not that those pleasures were 'the Pleasures of Sin?'"—What will you answer? If you cannot rationally excuse yourself to man, and, on Christian principles, defend your conduct; how will you meet Christ, arrayed in all his majesty and glory, at the judgment of the great day? Every practice that is truly agreeable to Christianity, is so manifestly good, that it needs no vindication: But every practice that is contrary to Christianity, requires argument to prove that it is allowable; but what argument shall make evil appear good, to Him that knoweth all things! Ah! my brethren! In the day of judgment, the sinner's arguments will all forsake him; his own sophisms shall be able to deceive him no longer. When he sees the world, on which his heart was set, dissolving in flames; and "the heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat;" when he hears the terrible sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" when he is cast into the lake of fire, "where the smoke of his torment shall ascend up for ever and ever:"—Then shall he know to his utter undoing, that "the Pleasures of Sin are only for a season." There is no mirth in hell; there are no pleasures amongst the damned: There is only "weeping, and wailing, and

and gnashing of teeth," because they are tormented in that flame: And one of the chief sources of their miseries is, that, through pursuing bubbles,—the veriest trifles of the world, which were as inconsistent with reason as with religion,—they have become damned to all eternity !!

4. Seeing then that the end of all those things is death, let me intreat you to have compassion on your own immortal spirits. O do not cast yourselves away; do not heedlessly perish; but "consider your ways, and be wise." Act a manly part; and bring your mind to serious reflection. He is a coward who dares not think; he is willingly deceived, who is reluctant to examine into the nature of those things which afford him delight. Let me beseech you to live at random no longer: But know what you are about, and whither you are going; and look more at the issue of a thing, than at any momentary gratification it may afford. Pray earnestly to God, that you may be delivered from that great curse of pleasure-takers, *a dissipated mind*; and that he would give you a *sober, thinking, understanding mind*; and the very day that such a mind is given you, it will appear self-evident to you, that the pleasures of the world in which you have indulged, are all sinful pleasures, and eternally ruinous to the soul. O what a cause of mourning is this, to a man whose eyes begin to be opened! There is nothing that demands deeper repentance, than long attachment to the pleasures of sin: Because we not only sin *in* those pleasures, but the love of them has an influence on the whole life, and produces a growing habit of indifference about the soul's everlasting concerns. Many who have felt serious impressions *when children*, have had those impressions

well nigh effaced in youth, by a fondness for the pleasures of the age. The pleasures of the world are Satan's grand means of alluring souls into the broad path that leads to destruction. Come out then of that broad path; forsake the world at once; "renounce its pomps and vanities;" and come to Christ, acknowledging, with sorrow and with shame, all your sinfulness in delighting in lying vanities; and believingly pray for his pardoning mercy, and his renewing grace, that you may love God with as much sincerity, and as much devotedness of heart, as once you loved the Pleasures of Sin for a season. Now then, in the strength of Christ, make a wise, and happy, and lasting choice. Rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin one day longer, "choose to suffer affliction with the people of God:" For, in so doing, you will also choose their *comforts* on earth, and their *glory* in heaven: And though such a step may bring upon you "the reproach of Christ," of that reproach you need never be ashamed: For his is an honourable name, and an honourable cause; and his service never fails to bring a vast and an eternal "recompence of reward."

SERMON VI.

GOD'S EVERLASTING DECREE.*

As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?—
EZEK. xxxiii. 11.

“THE wages of sin is death.”—“O wicked man! Thou shalt surely die!”—These awful truths, recorded by an apostle and a prophet, are confirmed through all the sacred volume. From Mount Sinai, amidst thunders and lightnings, the voice of God in the moral law proclaims, “The soul that sinneth shall die.” All the prophets repeat the warning, and cry aloud in our ears, “The wicked shall be turned into hell; and all the nations that forget God.” Jesus Christ, who was full of grace and truth, reminded the ungodly of “their worm that dieth not,” and of “the fire that is not

* A person who professed to be a Baptist Minister, came to Barbadoes to disseminate Autinomial principles amongst the members of the Methodist Society. It therefore became the Author's duty, to guard his hearers, in the best manner he could, against principles of such a dangerous tendency. In doing this, it was impossible to avoid touching on controversial subjects more than would have been necessary under other circumstances, on a Foreign Mission, where religious controversies are happily almost unknown.

quenched." The apostles also, by "the terrors of the Lord," sought "to persuade men" to flee from the "wrath to come." And "the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End," hath borne testimony from heaven to all the wicked on earth, saying, "The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." So clearly, in the written word, "is the wrath of God revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men!"

These threatenings ought to make sinners tremble. But behold with astonishment the obduracy and perverseness of the heart of man! They, who by their transgressions have become obnoxious to the divine displeasure, are so far from being moved with fear, and from acknowledging the justness of the sentence of condemnation, that they even presume to arraign the Almighty, and to question the equity of his proceedings! Instead of laying their mouth in the dust, and pleading GUILTY; they presumptuously exclaim, "The way of the Lord is not equal!" He makes not sufficient allowance for human weakness and infirmity; his punishments are too rigorous; his judgments too severe!" Such murmurings of heart against the holy Lord God are groundless; because he only "judges them after their own ways," and proceeds against them strictly according to their deserts, awarding them the death they have chosen, in opposition to his gracious will and pleasure. He that chooses sin, chooses hell, and all those terrible torments which are there to be endured. "The wages of sin is death."

When the house of Israel complained so often to Ezekiel,—“the way of the Lord is not equal,”—it is not improbable that they were led to such a conclusion, by comparing their punishment with the punishment of their forefathers. Their fathers sinned against God who brought them out of Egypt, and were sentenced to wander in the wilderness for *forty* years; but now Israel, because of their sins, were doomed to a captivity that should continue *seventy* years: How natural was it for them at this apparent inequality of punishment, to cry out, God is unjust—“The way of the Lord is not equal.”

With no less presumption did many of them cavil against the promises of God; as though he were insincere in making promises, to encourage them to seek for a renewal of heart, and for grace to reform their lives. “Thus they spake, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?” If our captivity is to continue seventy years; if through so long a period the punishment of our transgressions and sins is to be upon us, and we “pine away” under that punishment, despairing ever to see deliverance; “how should we then live” as God hath promised? How is the word to be fulfilled which you have told us in your ministry?,—“Whosoever the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” (Ezek. xviii. 27.) Does not the term of years appointed for our captivity shew, that, though we turned from our wickedness, we must die and not live? Hath not God, according to his own word of prophecy, unalterably decreed that we shall die for our sins? Either through the darkness

or perverseness of their minds, they misunderstood or misrepresented the conditional promise, as though it related to temporal life, and to a temporal deliverance. To obviate that objection, the prophet is directed to say, with greater explicitness than before, "If the wicked turn from his sin; and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die: None of his sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him, he shall surely live;"—the national punishment may remain, but he shall have his guilt removed, and shall become heir to life eternal in the world to come. (Ezek. xxxiii. 14—16.) In the mean time, Jehovah declares that the punishment of sinners can never be originally resolved into his decree. "He swears by himself, because he could swear by no greater; confirming thereby the immutability of his counsel;" he bids the prophet make known what is His sovereign will, and commands his ministers now to publish it to all the world: "*Say unto them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*"

To the several parts of this holy, just, sovereign, everlasting, unchangeable, and merciful decree, suffer me now to direct your attention.

- I. The gracious declaration;
- II. The compassionate warning;
- III. The moving entreaty.

I. THE GRACIOUS DECLARATION:

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure

in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

1. God has given various revelations of himself in the holy scriptures, and taught us to address him by various names; all of which are descriptive of his perfections, and point out the glorious attributes of the eternal Godhead. He is called "Jehovah;" that is, The Being: He who is self-existent and eternal: He who is the Source of being to all creatures, and consequently the Source of all happiness. He is called *Elohim*, God; or, "The Good Being;" for so the word God signified in the language of our ancestors;* and God, or the Good Being, is perhaps the very best translation that can be given of the name *Elohim*. This name seems to have a peculiar relative signification; hence in hundreds of instances, it has a relative word joined with it;—"thy God"—"to them a God;" and so on;—while we never once meet with the expression, "thy Jehovah." *Elohim*, however, does not seem to have a relative meaning in regard to angels; they worship him who is so named in the scriptures, as "Jehovah of Hosts;" (Isaiah vi. 3;) the Fountain of being and happiness to all their countless numbers, in all their various and subordinate degrees. But of mankind it is written, "God is not ashamed to be called *their* God;" (Heb. xi. 16;)—their *Elohim*; because man was "created in the image of God, in the image of God created he him." *El*, is the name of our Redeemer: He is called, *El-Shaddai*, "God All-sufficient:" (Gen. xvii. 1:) *El-Gibbor*; "The Mighty God;" (Isaiah ix. 6;) and *Immanu-El*, "God with us." (Isaiah vii. 14; and viii. 8—10; Matt. i. 23.) *Elohim*, there-

* Dr. A. Clarke on Genesis i. 1.

fore, we may with great propriety call "God;" or *The Good Being who bears peculiar and distinguished love towards his favourite creature man*. In the text he makes himself known by the names *Adonai-Jehovah*, or "Lord God;" that is, the Lord Jehovah; Jehovah the Sustainer, Jehovah the Governor, Jehovah the Sovereign: But the declaration which follows the name *Adonai*, shews that his sovereignty is amiable and lovely; as it only unfolds more fully the meaning of his original name, *Elohim*; and shews that he is still *The Good Being*, even to fallen, guilty, wicked man.—When God revealed himself unto Moses, and proclaimed his own name, he proclaimed it thus: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty;"—that is, those who, to the end of life, refuse to turn from their wickedness, that they may live. But where has the Divine Being taught us to call him "The God of wrath," "The God of eternal hatred against those who were originally made in his own image?" Where has he taught us to address him by a name resembling *Apollyon*, or Destroyer? Can we find in the Bible such a thing as "a horrible decree?" Hath God any where said, "Fury is in me?" (Isaiah xxvii. 4.) Must we not reject such notions of our *Elohim*; our "Good Being," with indignation? Do we not believe, that all the names of Deity point out his nature in accordance with the declaration of St. John, "God is love?" "This is his name for ever; and this is his memorial to all generations." (Exod. iii. 15.) And if to Moses he made himself known by a name, which has an eternity of

meaning in it, saying, "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE,"* and thus asserting his sovereignty in the most absolute language; yet we need not dread that sovereignty: For we, who have the sacred volume completed, can now discover that it is as though God had said unto Moses, "I will variously and more fully manifest my own glorious perfections, from the day I bring Israel out of Egypt, in all my future dispensations, *according to my own will and pleasure.*" We can look back on all those successive dispensations which were given to men by the sovereignty of God; and we only behold brighter and brighter displays of the glorious truth, "God is love." And still Jehovah "will be what he will be;" he will manifest himself as he pleases, "according to the counsel of his own will." But of this we are fully assured, that every future revelation of his perfections, throughout time and in eternity, shall demonstrate to all rational creatures, that, "from everlasting to everlasting, God is love." All the names then that God our heavenly Father bears,—the names which he has given to Himself, and taught us to use,—are demonstrations that the gracious declaration in the text is true: "The Lord God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." He that believes not this, ought never more to pronounce the name of God.

I. No theory can be established in opposition to facts: *Now the whole history of man, as contained in the sacred volume, is nothing less than one continued series of facts, each of which separately, and all of which collectively,*

* "I am that I am." The words are future in the original text:
אֲנִי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי

demonstrate most fully and satisfactorily that God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." What a wonderful system! What a beautiful world! Before any creatures were formed to inhabit it, one might rationally conclude that it was designed to be a happy world. No portion of it was suited for the abode of miserable beings; although it might be capable of affording, to different creatures, various degrees of happiness, according to the kind of existence it might please the Sovereign Creator to give. He peopled the world with reptiles, with fishes, with fowls, with beasts; but here is no misery: The Great Potter who had "power over the clay," did not originally make a single worm to be miserable. Last of all, he made man; man, the perfection of the system, the lord of the creation, and the glory of God. "The Lord God formed" the other irrational creatures "out of the ground:" (Gen. ii. 19:) But man he "formed out of the dust of the ground:" (Gen. ii. 7:)—out of finer materials, though still earthy, intimating to us the superior texture of the human frame: And, as the "Father of Spirits," he breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul;" a perfect creature of his kind. He created him in the image of God; wise, holy, intelligent, and happy. He endued him with his own immortality, that he might become capable of enjoying everlasting felicity.

It became the wisdom and goodness of God, to place in a state of trial a creature so highly exalted, before he gave him the highest measures of enjoyment of which he was capable. To be exempt from a possibility of falling, seems to be a part of the rewards of eternity: To be liable to fall, is a necessary consequence of a pro-

bationary state. Now happiness that flows from reward, is enhanced by that very circumstance ; because all the Creator's rewards are infinitely superior to any real deserts of the creature, and are always founded on his own benevolence and grace. Every reward therefore received from the hand of God, associates with itself numerous recollections ;—a recollection of the creature's origin ;—a recollection of his trials while in a state of probation, and of the manner in which the wisdom of God directed, and the power and goodness of God upheld and saved him to the end ;—joined with the astonishing thought, that he is infinitely and eternally rewarded for doing only what he ought to have done ; and for which he would have been sufficiently compensated by the preservation of his original happiness. *Every thought which can in any way arise out of rewardable happiness, is a means of increasing that happiness* : And that man might be capable of such happiness, God placed him in a state of trial upon earth, and gave unto him his holy law.

The free-agency of man was a necessary consequence of his being placed in a state of trial ; and it is certain, that his Creator, in giving him that awful power of choosing good or evil, was influenced only by love. Hence he so constituted him, that he should only be *permitted* to do evil ; while, from his native purity and the constant influence of God upon his mind, he should be *strongly drawn and inclined* to do good. A law was given him, with a threatening annexed, to be a means of preserving him from apostacy. The law was “ordained to life”—designed to keep him in the way of obedience, that by “doing good, he might dwell for evermore.” Man thus formed in the image of God, was the glory of

the world he inhabited; the Creator surveyed all his works with inexpressible delight, and pronounced the whole to be "very good." "As for God, his work was perfect;" the existence of misery did not appear to be wanting to give an idea of his sovereignty; but the whole creation seemed to proclaim that God is "*sovereign love*." As yet then we meet with no proof, that God had any pleasure in the death of man, though he foreknew that he would become wicked by transgressing his holy law.

What do we read in the history of the fall of man? That it originated with God, he having decreed from all eternity that it should *unavoidably* be brought about; and that the devil should be his chief agent in accomplishing the work of destruction? That he should be called from the bottomless pit, to do "the will of God on earth," by effectuating the ruin of our race? No! St. Paul informs us,—“By one *man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” (Rom. v. 12.) Here is the origin of all our present miseries; their only source is the perverted free will of man. God conditionally willed the continued happiness of man, and he sincerely expressed that will in the requirements of his law; but the peculiar feature, or, as the apostle expresses it, "the similitude of Adam's transgression," was, that he became disobedient in opposition to the native desires of his heart: He willingly admitted evil into his soul, and was therefore justly condemned by him who judgeth righteously.

The great plan of human redemption arose out of the circumstances of man's original sin and misery. God foreknowing that man would, by the abuse of that responsibility which lay upon him, wickedly depart from himself, determined, "according to his own purpose and

grace," that, when that event should have taken place, he would give a new display of his own character as the God of love, in the promise of a Redeemer. Thus we find, that the Lord God was so far from having "pleasure in the death of the wicked," "*before* he had done good or evil," that he had no pleasure in his deserved death, *after* he became a transgressor; but determined to place him in a new state of trial, and to afford him the grace which his wretched circumstances required, to enable him to "turn from his wickedness," that after all "he might live."

The scheme of human redemption was wonderful indeed! The Redeemer was to be no less a person than the Son of God. He who is called in the second and third chapters of Genesis, *Jehovah Elohim*, "the Lord God;" who "spake in time past" to Adam, both the law, and the promise of redemption. The manner in which he should become our Redeemer, was pointed out in that original promise. He was to become incarnate; to become *man*, *the representative of the whole species*; to take the nature of all men, that he might be the "Saviour of all men." He was to be made man, not by having a body created in all that glory with which Adam was adorned before he fell; but by becoming the woman's seed, that he might appear "in the likeness of sinful flesh," "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His heel was to be bruised. His body was to be nailed to the cross; and his soul to be made an "offering for sin."

All this has been accomplished. "In the fulness of time," Christ was born. At his birth the oath Jehovah hath sworn, was confirmed by the song of angels: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-

will towards men;" towards the whole race: For, "Behold!" said the forerunner of the heavenly host, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke ii. 11.) The very name, *Saviour*, proclaims to a fallen world, that God wills not the misery of man. Where is the sinner who has not a right to pronounce the name SAVIOUR? Who is there amongst all the fallen race who cannot call him *Kinsman* and *Redeemer*? The man who may not thus accost him, cannot be found, either in the line of Shem, or of Japhet, or of Ham; either amongst the sons of Abraham, or amongst the sinners of the Gentiles. Throughout China and Japan, and all the populous countries of the East, throughout the deserts of Tartary, the wilds of Africa, and the woods of America, and in all the cities of civilized Europe;—in every place, all round the globe, and all through the globe, all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, may rejoice to cry aloud, "A Saviour! A Saviour!" in whom is provided salvation for every human soul.

SALVATION! let the echo fly
 The spacious earth around;
 While all the armies of the sky,
 Conspire to raise the sound.

"Jesus Christ by the grace of God," by the free love of the Father, "tasted death for every man." "He gave himself a ransom for all." "He gave himself a ransom for many;" literally, for "multitudes," namely, the multitudes of the elect world; for so our world may be significantly called: As it is written, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who-

soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And again, "As by one man's disobedience, many," that is, the multitudes of the human race, "were made sinners;" "so by the obedience of one, shall many," the multitudes of the human race, "be made righteous." "As by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation; *even so* by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon ALL men to justification of life." Jesus Christ then is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." On this very account it is, that we read, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive:" That is, all human bodies shall be raised in the last day. Wherefore raised, *but because they are redeemed from the power of death?* We must allow, therefore, that *the half of every man* is redeemed; and if every human body, surely also every immortal soul. Hence it is, my brethren, that we are emboldened, and encouraged to "preach the gospel to every creature;" because we believe there is a gospel for every creature; and that "God hath sent his Son Jesus to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." And he hath thus sent him, in fulfilment of the covenant-promise "which he made with our fathers, saying, unto Abraham, *And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*" (Acts iii. 25, 26.) In the transactions of Calvary we have the solemn oath of Jehovah confirmed by the most moving evidence. God had pleasure in the death of his own Son, when "he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all;" "for *it pleased* the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief, and to make his soul an offering for sin:" But in that deed he has caused our hearts to receive the most convincing evidence that he hath "no pleasure in the death of the wicked ;

but that the wicked should turn from his way and live."

Through the redemption of Christ Jesus, all our blessings flow. We owe our being to the grace of the Redeemer. For had the original transgressor been cut off, according to his demerits, and cast into "everlasting fire," we should have justly perished in him, and have been deprived of the blessing of conscious existence, as well as of the still greater blessing,—a capability of knowing and enjoying God for ever. *That we are*, is a continual proof that we are redeemed. Hence Dr. Watts has truly observed, in reference to the Redeemer,

There's not a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.

From whence it follows, that, as his hand bestows many gifts upon us all, his heart has groaned for us all; and that the fact of the redemption of all mankind is fully established, when we only open the Bible and read, "Your Father who is in heaven, maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust." In this view of the blessings we enjoy, we may regard the whole creation as full of proofs of the gracious declaration contained in the text. Every ray of light that flows from the sun, every drop of rain that descends from heaven, every breeze that refreshes in the air, every blade of grass that springs out of the earth, and every bud that shoots forth its blossom on the trees, has received a new voice; and, in new strains, they all declare the glory of the God of love, proclaiming aloud, day after

day, and night after night, these gracious words, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

Through the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, and his exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the Holy Ghost is given unto all the sons of men. Here a new subject opens to our view,—a fact, which, if established, strongly proves to every man's own conscience, that God has no pleasure in the death of any sinner. How read we then in the law? "Christ was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John i. 9.) He enlighteneth every man by his Holy Spirit; though in too many instances, through the obstinacy of man, the "light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Yet there are seasons when a "manifestation of the Spirit," in some one of his "diversities of operations," is "given to every man to profit withal." The influences of the Holy Spirit, in various degrees, according as it hath pleased God, have been vouchsafed to all men in every age of the world. Cain perished, not because he was the son of Adam, but because he refused to bring a sacrificial offering, and to hearken to the voice of God, who said unto him, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" "If thou doest well," that is, *through the gracious aid of my Spirit*; for, without the aid of the Spirit, he could no more do a good thing than he could create a world. Those who perished in the universal deluge had "preachers of righteousness sent unto them;" and with their word the Holy Spirit was given to "convince the world of sin." "My Spirit," said God unto Noah, "shall not always strive

with man, for that he also is flesh ;” or fleshly, carnally minded, and will not yield to my gracious influences ; “ yet his days shall be an hundred-and-twenty years.” (Gen. vi. 3.) During that period the Spirit continued striving with them ; but throughout the whole time of merciful visitation, they “ were disobedient,” although “ the long-suffering of God waited” for their repentance and salvation. (1 Peter iii. 20.) And when he foresaw that they would continue impenitent to the last, and when, to maintain the honour of his own government, he determined to sweep them from the earth as with the besom of destruction,—did he even then declare that he had “ pleasure in the death of the wicked ?” No : The denunciations of his vengeance are preceded by these remarkable words : “ It repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” (Gen. vi. 6.) But wherefore *grieve*, if he had originally made them “ vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction ?” Does Jehovah *grieve* because, what some people call, his own counsels are come to pass, on which his heart, it is said, had been set from all eternity.

In succeeding ages, the Spirit was also given to the sons of men. Even Pharaoh had received a measure of the Spirit of God, whereby he might have been enabled, at different periods, to prove obedient to the word of God, in “ letting Israel go.” Else it had been folly to have delivered a charge to that effect unto him ; because it would have been absolutely out of his power at all to have regarded it, if divine influence had been wholly and constantly withheld from him. Of this every one must be convinced who considers, that God is the only source of good ; so that, as it regards

the original moving of the inclination to any good purpose or design whatsoever, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 16.) But when, after many yieldings, which God graciously accepted by removing his judgments, he again and again hardened his own heart;—when he had "resisted the Holy Ghost always," (Acts vii. 51,) by refusing to let Israel go, and by continuing to "exalt himself against them," and against God;—then, and not till then, did God declare his judicial purpose, saying, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up" from under my successive judgments, instead of cutting thee off at a stroke, "that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. ix. 17.) Thus did he "endure with much long-suffering" the provocations of that "vessel of wrath," giving him "space to repent;" but when "he repented not," (Rev. ii. 21,) and thereby became "fitted to destruction," God "willed to shew his wrath, and to make his power known" in bringing that destruction upon him; that all the nations of the earth might fear, and in his example read this awful truth: "Therefore hath the God of Israel mercy on whom he will have mercy;"—as he hath said, "on the wicked man that turneth from his wickedness, that he may live." But "whom he will he hardeneth,"—namely, the wicked who will not turn from his wickedness; as it is written again, "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. 1.) Pharaoh, therefore, after refusing the high honour that was in his power, of becoming the liberator of the children of Israel,—by which action he would have greatly

glorified God, and have become a distinguished "vessel of mercy,"—could not, because he was at length judicially abandoned, go murmuring down to hell, saying, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" He had awfully resisted the will of God many times before his final hardening; but, after that event, he could resist that will no longer, because he was then "appointed to wrath," and "sentence was about to be speedily executed against him," and his people.

If these instances may serve to shew, that the Holy Spirit has not been withheld from the most sinful of men in different periods of the world, we have the same proofs of his having been given generally to the Jewish nation. Because Christ was "their Saviour;" because "in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old;" (Isaiah lxiii. 9;) therefore did he give his Holy Spirit unto them. "Of old the Lord appeared unto them, saying, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: Therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.*" (Jer. xxxi. 3.) But notwithstanding this loving-kindness of God, though he was "their Father; though they were the clay, and he the potter" who had made them, in an eminent sense, "vessels unto honour;" yet through their unbelief and disobedience, they became "vessels unto dishonour," as one of their own prophets testified, saying, "*Reprobate silver* shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them." (Jer. vi. 30.) Hence we need not wonder at the strong language of Isaiah, who, immediately after he had spoken of the *redeeming love and pity* that were shewn toward them, testifies, "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit:

Therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." (Isaiah lxiii. 9, 10.) That the Holy Spirit was given to their descendants, even to the most rebellious of them; and that he had striven generally with the Israelites, through every succeeding generation, is clear from these words of Stephen, when he stood before the Jewish Council:—"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: As your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 51.)

The darkest of Pagan nations are not utterly denied the influences of the Spirit, which they receive through the merits of a Redeemer, of whom as yet they have never heard. It has been observed, by one who has travelled much in the dreary deserts and forests of Africa, that he has frequently been with individuals of the Negro race who had committed murder; but that he had never met with a murderer, whose conscience, in the darkness of night, did not make him afraid. That man has never existed, whose conscience did not, at some period or other, reprove him for sin, or convince him that he was doing wrong. But what is conscience, since the fall of man, but a dead, unfeeling faculty, when considered as wholly devoid of the influence of the Spirit of God? It cannot discern evil, without a ray of his light; nor reprove for evil, without a measure of his gracious power. As sure then as even the conscience of Heathens "bears them witness, their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;" (Rom. ii. 15;) so sure have they also, through the redemption of Christ, received the gift of the Holy Ghost, whose influence in the heart enables conscience to exercise its power. And if they have not a law engraven on

stones, as Israel had; or the "law of liberty" in the everlasting gospel, as we have; nevertheless, they are not absolutely without any law, for they have "the work of the law,"—the inferior law of nature,—"written in their hearts." It is not naturally in their hearts, any more than the gospel is in ours; "but it is written" there, in plain and legible characters by *the finger of God*. God is the fountain of law to man. Every law which he has given since the fall, has been *suited to the condition of man as a fallen creature*, and of course "ordained in the hand of a Mediator." (Gal. iii. 19.) Therefore, that least glorious law which he has given to the Heathen, comes through Christ: This leads us to the conclusion—that he is their Redeemer, and that he has bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them. On this ground it is, that they are morally capable of *hearing*, when "the heavens declare the glory of God;" and of *seeing*, when the "firmament sheweth his handy work." "Because that which may be known of God," in the visible creation, "is manifest in them," by a measure of light from the Eternal Spirit. "For God" himself "hath shewed it unto them." On this ground it is, that they are wholly "without excuse," if when they "know God," however imperfectly, by his own teaching, (for how else can any man know God?) "they glorify him not as God" the *Creator*; but through pride and idolatry, "become vain in their imaginations, their foolish heart being darkened" more and more, until they have quenched the light which shone in their native darkness. But then, after they have thus "rebelled against and vexed his holy Spirit," God is awfully just in "giving them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts;" (Rom. i. 24;) in "giving

them up unto vile affections ;” (Rom. i. 26 ;)—and “in giving them over to a reprobate mind.” (Rom. i. 28.) The light of the Spirit then is as universal as the light of the sun ; only it shines in various degrees : There is the twilight, the opening morning, and the perfect day. But, in a greater or less degree, “the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” (Titus ii. 11.)

It is however under the preaching of the gospel of Christ, in a more especial manner, that the Holy Spirit is poured out from on high. The promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost in all his sanctifying influences, and as “The Comforter and the Spirit of truth,” who is to “glorify Christ and lead into all truth,” belongs unto us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call by the everlasting gospel. For “every creature” called by the gospel, is encouraged to look for the great gospel promise, the indwelling Spirit of God. “The Spirit and the Bride say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” In this free manner, you have been often invited, under our ministry, to come : And have you never felt the Spirit in your hearts applying the word, and repeating the invitation, “Come?” Is there one individual amongst us, with whom the Spirit of God has not striven? Have you never felt an awful fear of death, and judgment, and eternity ; or a sense of your sinfulness, and guilt, and misery ; or a desire for pardon and salvation? All those gracious fears and holy desires proceeded, not from your own hearts,—for “in us dwelleth no good thing,”—but from the influence of the Spirit of God.

It was God bearing testimony in your hearts to the truth of his holy word :—"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live."

The last fact in the history of man, that we shall now adduce, in confirmation of the declaration in the text, is this :—All the dispensations of God in his providence prove him to be slow to anger, and unwilling to punish for sins. The sacred volume contains many awful accounts of the judgments of God, towards individuals, and towards nations. But did not his threatenings precede those judgments ? Were not the punishments which had been threatened, often delayed for a considerable period ? Was not the intervening time often marked by the employment of extraordinary means, to bring those to repentance, who were filling up the measure of their iniquities ? The first account we have of Jehovah personally speaking to any of the human race, after man had been expelled from Eden, is found in the address of God unto Cain. It was after Cain had become "very wroth, and his countenance was fallen," the murderous purpose being already conceived in his heart, that God most graciously interposed in an extraordinary manner, to prevent him from the commission of the crime, reasoning with him so compassionately and tenderly, as to evince most clearly, that he had no pleasure in the death of even an intentionally persecuting murderer of his own brother. And the Lord said unto Cain, "*Why art thou wroth ? And why is thy countenance fallen ? If thou wilt do well,*" by bringing of the firstlings of thy flock, as Abel has done, "*shalt not thou also be accepted ? But if thou wilt not do well,*" by bringing "*the sin-offering*" at hand, that "*lieth at the door ;*"—still, even then

thou hast no need to be envious of thy brother and to become his murderer:—For my acceptance of his person shall not give him the right of primogeniture;—even though thou wilt not thus do well, still, “*unto thee shall his desire be subjected, and thou shalt rule over him.*”—(Gen. ii. 3—7.) O what pains did God take to prevent Cain from becoming “a son of perdition;” to reason him out of his evil reasonings; to turn him from his wickedness, that he might not eternally die, but live! In like manner an Enoch and a Noah were employed as preachers of righteousness, before the flood swept away men from the face of the earth. A Moses and an Aaron were sent unto Pharaoh, and many extraordinary wonders were wrought in the sight of the Egyptians, before they were overthrown and destroyed. The wandering of Israel in the wilderness for forty years, though a punishment to the Jews for their unbelief and disobedience, was a most gracious reprieve to the Canaanites, and afforded them a longer “space for repentance;” especially when viewed in connection with the wonders wrought by the power of Jehovah, at the Red Sea, which were noised abroad in all those lands. Nor could they have been unacquainted with the singular dispensations of God towards his people, throughout those forty years; as those nations were situated on the borders of that wilderness where the Israelites sojourned. An Elijah and an Elisha were raised up, before the dispersion of the ten tribes: An Isaiah and a Jeremiah, before the captivity of Judah. Daniel was sent to preach righteousness to Belshazzar, the very night that he was slain; and thus to give him warning, that, if his life could not be spared, his soul might have been saved at the eleventh hour. John the Baptist, and Christ him-

self, and the apostles, preached the way of salvation to the Jewish nation, before their final rejection and scattering into all lands. "And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Sampson, of David," of Peter, of Judas; men who after they had been saved, became wicked, by "turning away from their righteousness, and committing iniquity," and to all of whom God was slow to anger, because he had no pleasure in their death. And those of them who turned from their wickedness, he pardoned; while those apostates who "filled up the measure of their iniquities," died in their sin. And God seems even to delay the fulfilment of the final "promise," of coming "to be glorified in the saints," in compassion to a guilty world. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii. 9.)

It is indeed awfully true, that many "despise the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance;" and that "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Rom. ii. 4; Eccles. viii. 11.) But such aggravated transgressions, on the part of man, only serve to place the long-suffering of God in a still more striking light: And, to use once more his own significant declaration, "it grieves him to the heart that he has made man," when man has so absolutely fitted himself for destruction, that he cannot consistently with the wisdom, and holiness, and justice, and goodness of God, be any longer spared. If God had never visited this world with his judgments, to such a pitch of wickedness,

and impiety, and infidelity would men have arrived by this time, that Atheism would have been almost universally professed, and our whole earth would have become an Aceldama, or "field of blood." See what it is now, notwithstanding "the hand of the Lord has been lifted up" so often; and infer what it would have been, had he never shewn himself to be a judge in the earth. Yet the long delay of "the day of vengeance" proves, that judgment is God's strange work, while mercy is his delight.

Therefore we conclude, from all the facts connected with the history of man, throughout every age of the world, and from all the revelations which God has given of himself unto man, that, so far as it relates to God, "one thing only can be found,"—"God is love:" But that, so far as it relates to man, this also have we found,—the most striking evidence of the unbelief and depravity of the human heart lies in his readiness to question, in the face of so many facts, this character of God.

God then *originally* wills the destruction of no man; but he *conditionally* wills the salvation of all men. I say *conditionally*, because he wills not that the wicked should live if they continue in their transgressions: For he is "not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him." (Psalm v. 4.) God could not permit sinners, who "die in their sins," to live eternally in his presence. The very notion involves numberless absurdities. For he must then cease to be God, and become "altogether such an one as they are;" he must trample on his own authority and law; he must pour contempt on all the sufferings of his well-beloved Son; and he must become unjust to all the holy angels, and to all the saints who have faithfully served him:

For the introduction of sinners into the heaven where they dwell, would be the introduction of all those miseries and discords which persecutors and ungodly men make on earth. It is, therefore, the holy, and just, and gracious "pleasure" of God, that the wicked shall live *on this sole condition*, "that he turn from his wickedness;" else, notwithstanding the goodness of God, he shall die to all eternity.

I proceed therefore to apply

II. THE COMPASSIONATE WARNING.

"Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways."

1. The first thing this affectionate warning requires of sinners, is CONSIDERATION. "Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways." (Haggai i. 5, 7.) To consider our ways is necessary, as a preparatory step to forsaking them. "Multitudes," says Mr. Henry, "are undone because they are unthinking." Could we bear a sight of the torments of the damned, and were we permitted to inquire of every lost spirit, "What was the chief, amongst the various causes, that brought you to this place of irremediable woe?" how often would the caverns of hell resound with this one word "Inconsideration!" How few are there who live on earth like thinking beings! Who inquire seriously, "For what end was I made? Am I pleasing God? Am I, according to the scriptures, in the way that leads to glory?" Most men take it for granted, that somehow or other, all will end well at last, without taking pains to examine the matter, and without "taking any heed to their ways." Now then, I beseech you, make a right use of the powers of your mind, and at this hour seriously and prayerfully consider your ways.

Consider that they are "evil ways." That is a sufficient reason why you should turn from them. No wise man would willingly and knowingly persevere in sin, in the practice of those things which God hath forbidden, and which can never contribute to his own peace, either in time, or in eternity.

Consider in what respects they are evil. They are evil, because they are *your own ways*; such ways as one naturally loves when he walks after the imagination of his own heart. "I have pleasure," saith the Lord God, "that the wicked turn from *his way*: Turn ye, turn ye, from *your evil ways*." Nothing good can proceed from nature; and it is a sure evidence that any way is evil, if it be only agreeable to the carnal mind. They are evil, inasmuch as they dishonour God. Sin is a transgression of the divine law. Every sin, therefore, is an affront offered to the Lawgiver, whose authority is contemned, whose threatenings are despised, and whose vengeance is dared. It is impossible for the tongue of man or angel, adequately to describe the malignity there is in sin. It is a violation of all those duties which arise from the various relations in which we stand to God. As our Creator, we owe him reverence; as our Lawgiver, obedience; as our Preserver, gratitude; as our Father, love; as our Friend, confidence; as our God, our entire all; and as our Judge, we ought to endeavour to secure his righteous favour. But every sin is an offence committed against all these several relations, so that many transgressions appear to concentrate in one single evil deed. O, where shall we find words to set forth the evil of sin! Sin would change every thing into its own nature, were not its influence counteracted by a mightier principle. It would make every man a fiend,

every angel a devil, the earth a chaos, and heaven a hell. It would extinguish the light of happiness from all worlds, and reduce all creatures to the last stages of misery, that would be consistent with their existing to feel the pangs of woe. Such being its nature, how certain is it, that the ways of sinners are "*evil ways*," and that they can never know peace in them !

Consider further, that those ways are evil in their influence. There is great weight in the observation of Solomon, "One sinner destroyeth much good." The baneful influence of evil example is almost incredible. Imitation of others, especially of those with whom we frequently converse, almost insensibly steals upon us. How many children have early imbibed destructive principles, and become habituated to the practice of vice, from hearing the conversation, and from witnessing the bad example of their parents ; or of those to whose guardian care they have been entrusted ! How often have good impressions been erased from the minds of youth, through the prevalence of iniquity, and the frequent scenes of wickedness which they have been called to behold ! How many have become confirmed in crime, through "joining hand in hand" with the lovers of iniquity ! Were there only a solitary sinner, like Cain he would be obliged to flee from the society of mankind, and become "a fugitive and a vagabond" on the earth. But the "multitudes that do evil," embolden every individual sinner in the practice of his particular evil ; and thus evil example, like a plague, spreads a moral contagion throughout the whole community. Now this is a reason why men should turn from their evil ways. Were it possible for you to continue in sin to the injury of none beside yourself, you would be far less criminal :

but why should you be the general enemies of mankind? Were you common murderers, bathing your hands from morning till night in human gore, you would be comparatively innocent; but why should you be guilty of the irreparable crime of destroying immortal souls? Think how many have already gone into eternity, who were once your associates in sin; call to mind the names of those that lie in the burying-place of the dead, whom you were the means of hardening in iniquity! Were you cut off in your present evil course; were the blood that now flows in your veins chilled in its progress, and suddenly stopped; were an angel commissioned to blow a pestilential wind across the land, and to mark you out as *the first* that should sicken and die;—how many souls in hell would “move to meet you at your coming!” Whilst your surviving companions would return intoxicated from your grave, and still go on in the same course that your example has pointed out, till they also came to “that place of torment!” Will you not at the remembrance of these things, consider that your ways are most awfully evil? That you have been long enough employed in accomplishing the ruin of your fellow-men, and that it is now time to turn from them, that you may live?

Consider yet more particularly, and with still deeper seriousness, the end of your ways. They will end, if you turn not from them, in the everlasting ruin of body and soul. That body, so curiously and wonderfully made, shall endure the anguish of the fire that shall never be quenched. Every sense shall be an instrument of pain, a source of misery. The eye shall see no beauty; it shall only behold the horrible deformity of fallen spirits, their fiend-like countenances, their signs

of torture, and the "smoke of the blackness of darkness" rendered visible by the fiery deluge. The ear shall hear nothing but sighs and groans, "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." There are no Hallelujahs in hell; no praise, no prayer, nothing but cries of unutterable despair. The tongue has no employment, but to curse and blaspheme. But what sorrows are felt in the immortal mind! While there remains nothing but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries of the Lord;" they feel despair at 'the two-fold recollection,—that *once* they had a sacrifice for their sin;—but that now there remaineth *no more* sacrifice for sins." (Heb. x. 26, 27.)

Consider then that one word ETERNITY! ETERNITY! How shall I help you to form some idea of Eternity! Suppose that every drop of water in the ocean were severally formed into a new ocean;—and that each drop of those multiplied oceans were again multiplied into myriads of myriads of oceans more;—and that, throughout a revolution of years, equal in number to the drops contained in the whole, one drop only should be diminished, till all were expended;—vast and almost infinite as would be the period required to empty those millions of oceans of all their store, still the whole time would not be a second of eternity. Numbers cannot give an adequate idea of eternity; it is beyond calculation: Nor can measure, for it has no end; there is no last in eternity. Eternity belongs to man. There was a period when he was not; but, once existing, there shall no period come when he shall cease to be. He shall exist as long as God exists; that is, for ever and ever. But who can

bear a miserable eternity? “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isaiah xxxiii. 14.) I can determine these awful questions now: *Every man among us that turneth not away from his evil ways.* And it is because God sees what will be the unutterable awful issue of those ways, that he so repeatedly and earnestly, and solemnly, and compassionately warns us, saying,—“Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?”

2. God would have us consider our ways, that we may feel penitence of soul: And in the solemn warning which has just been repeated, he calls you to repentance. Sinners, you have cause to weep! If you have right views of yourselves, and right feelings of heart, contrition will now arise, and you will go away this night into some secret place, and “weep bitterly” on account of your many, and great, and aggravated transgressions. Who ought to mourn, if you mourn not? The grand cause of sorrow and anguish of soul is, not that your ways have been *occasionally* evil, in one or two solitary instances, (although so great an evil is sin, that if a man had only sinned once, for that single transgression he ought to go sorrowing to the grave,) but because your ways have been *all* evil, “*only* evil, and that *continually*.” “O that your head were waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears, that you might weep day and night” because of your evil ways! Ask the gift of repentance through the merits of Him “you have pierced.” Raise your hearts to God, and let your desires accompany my words, while I repeat these lines, which contain for you an appropriate prayer:

O for that tenderness of heart,
Which bows before the Lord,
Acknowledging how just thou art,
And trembles at thy word !

O for those humble, contrite tears,
Which from repentance flow ;
That consciousness of guilt, which fears
The long-suspended blow !

Saviour ! to me in pity give
The sensible distress ;
The pledge, thou wilt at last receive
And bid me die in peace.

Do you indeed feel aught of this “sensible distress?” *There is not a single religious reflection that you can make, which will not tend to increase it.* Every thought will minister to godly sorrow, and to a conviction of its necessity.—Will you think of God? All your ways have been evil towards him. His sabbaths have been disregarded ; his name blasphemed ; his ministers contemned ; his authority despised ; his judgments dared ; his mercies abused ; his gospel rejected ; his Son “crucified afresh ;” and all that he hath done to save you, rendered ineffectual, because you have “hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”—Will you think of yourselves? Ah ! you have “wronged your own soul.” Had you served God faithfully from the first moment of his striving with you by his Holy Spirit, what a contrast would your moral, and perhaps your temporal, condition, have afforded to what it now is ! As the reward of your evil ways, for health you have sickness ; for strength, an enfeebled constitution ; for vigour, trembling ; for bloom, paleness ; instead of comfort, dejection ; instead of hope, despair ; instead of

standing on the verge of glory, you are come almost within the precincts of hell.—Will you think of your families? How neglected, with regard to their souls! Your children have been baptized, but never instructed in the religion of Christ whose name they bear; and as to your servants, how justly may they cry out, “No man careth for our souls?”—Will you think of your country? How have you helped to fill up the measure of your fathers’ iniquities, until you have become ripe for destruction!—Will you think of the past? It brings no joy. Of the future? It yields no hope. Of the present? It has no enjoyment.

After all these reflections, will you not mourn? Will you not desire to mourn? Do you sincerely desire that sorrow which you cannot yet feel? Then be assured, that the God of Israel, who bade Moses command the rock to send forth waters, and whose power caused the gushing streams to flow in every direction, will also give you soon to find “the meltings of a broken heart.” Peradventure he will, just now, give you repentance, while listening to these gracious scriptures: “Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat-offering and a drink-offering, unto the Lord your God.” (Joel ii. 12—14.) “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: And not that he should return from his way and live? Repent and turn from all your trans-

gressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: For why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: Wherefore turn and live ye." (Ezek. xviii. 23, 30—32.)

3. But let your sorrowing be after a godly sort, leading you to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance:" Such fruits as are proper to a penitent state of soul; and such as are in the power of a repenting sinner, through the grace of that good Spirit who hath convinced him of sin. Reform your lives. "Cease to do evil; learn to do well." "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways." Resist evil always; and, so far as you are able, overcome it. Turn from evil companions: Turn from evil principles: Turn from evil practices: Turn unto God through Jesus Christ, and he will freely pardon all your sins. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: And let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isaiah lv. 6.)

O that the gracious declarations of scripture, and its solemn warnings, were always effectual in producing the conversion of sinners! O that they "would hearken to the voice of God in them, and obey his commandments! Then would their peace be as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea." (Isaiah xlvi. 18.) But alas! In many instances all those declarations and warnings are in vain. Through the deep depravity of the heart, through the power of unbelief, through the deceitfulness of sin, through the

strength of temptation, and through the influence of example, multitudes do still “pervert their way, and forget the Lord their God.”—“We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: For we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.” (Jer. iii. 21, 25.)

But, after all, Jehovah will not abandon sinners, until one other means has been resorted unto,—until he has tried what effect will be produced by those tender entreaties, which proceed from the yearning of his bowels, as the Father of mercies, the God of the Spirits of all flesh. He follows us in all our wanderings, and in all our guilt, with

III. THE MOVING ENTREATY:—“Why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

1. Jehovah appeals to his own mercies which have been ever of old. “Why will *ye* die, O house of Israel?” As though he had said—If the wicked of other nations, whom I have never chosen and elected to be mine own peculiar people, and distinguished as “vessels of honour,” will perish in their iniquities, they may seem to have some plea for their obstinacy, in their envy at your superior privileges, and at their comparative reprobation, saying unto me, “Why hast thou made us thus?” But you have no such plea, O house of Israel; you, whom I have loved and “called out of Egypt to be my son;” you, “to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.” (Rom. ix. 4.) After my absolute and sovereign election of

you to such extraordinary privileges, by which I have manifested to you above all nations, that "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" and after I had conditionally elected you to higher degrees of future glory than were designed for other people, will you, through refusing to "turn from your evil ways," become reprobates, and be for ever "cast away?" After having been *graciously* exalted to heaven, will you be *judicially* brought down to hell? "Why will *ye* DIE, O house of Israel?"

This appeal, so tender and forcible, when made to the ancient Israelites, will lose nothing of its power when brought home to our hearts. "Why will *ye* die," O sinners, born to superior privileges, under the last and most perfect dispensation of grace and mercy? Ye, who were made for God and heaven; and who have been preserved in the land of the living unto this very hour, for no other end than that you may live with God for ever? Ye, whose capabilities of happiness are so great, who possess a mind with powers so vast, that in a moment you can bound from earth to heaven, and travel in contemplation through unseen worlds, and converse with the most exalted of the celestial intelligences, and hold communion with the eternal Tri-une Jehovah? Ye, who are designed for all that happiness which you are capable of enjoying; for whose mind God has provided inexhaustible stores of knowledge of the highest and most exalting kind; and whose desires, it is his good pleasure, should be satisfied with the eternal manifestations of his own presence and favour? Ye, whom he has made for himself, that he may be your all in all? "Why will *ye* die," whom he hath *so loved*, "with an everlasting love," "as to give his only begotten Son,

that, by believing on him, you should not perish, but have everlasting life?" Why will ye perish, who have heard "the saying worthy of all acceptation, that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?*" Ye, whose nature the Redeemer took; for the atonement of whose sins his blood was shed; for whom he prayed on the cross, and intercedes in heaven; for whose sake he undertook the whole work of a Mediator, that you might be eternally saved, *if* you would only turn from your way and live? Ye, who have been favoured with the gospel of salvation, with the drawings of the Father, and with the strivings of the Holy Spirit; and for whom the Redeemer has long been pleading, "Lord, let it alone this year also?" Because you refuse to turn from your way and live, must even the Redeemer consent, notwithstanding his own intercessions, which are founded on his atonement, that at length you should be "cut down?" After all the loving kindness which I have shewn you, "O house of Israel, why will ye die?"—Thus does Jehovah appeal to his own mercies, unto all his *gracious designs*, and unto all his *gracious conduct*, in confirmation of his *gracious declaration* that he hath no pleasure in the misery of man.

When Christ was upon earth, he wept over sinners before he destroyed them. He who sincerely wept at the grave of Lazarus, his chosen friend, did, with no less sincerity, and perhaps with a far deeper sorrow, weep over the reprobated Jews his enemies, whose "end was destruction." "When Jesus was come near to Jerusalem, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, *O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. O Jerusalem, Jeru-*

salem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !" (Luke xix. 41, 42 : Matt. xxiii. 37.) Need we wonder then at the inquiry, "*Why will ye die?*"

2. Jehovah, knowing that our death originated not in his own will and pleasure, speaks as one at a loss to know from what cause it could originate; as though there must be *some powerful reason influencing the will of man*, to make so dreadful a choice, in opposition to so much goodness and mercy as had been shewn unto him: And as though he were anxious to find out the latent reason, that he might remove it, in compassion to our infirmities he thus speaks, "*Why will ye die?*"

Can it be from a principle of despair? Are you determined to "pine away in your transgressions and in your sins?" Do you, under the chastening hand of God, as visible in blighting your prospects of earthly happiness, and in bringing upon you many temporal calamities and distresses, give yourselves up to "worldly sorrow which worketh death?" And are you so absorbed in grief for the loss of property, or of health, or of friends, that you care not what happens; and are become almost equally indifferent to both worlds, determined to go repining to the grave and to hell? Will ye die because there is no hope for you in the tender mercies of God? Do you conceive, that your day of grace is past; or that you have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost; or that God cannot, consistently with his own justice, and truth, and holiness, forgive and save one whose sins have been so great

and aggravated beyond example? "Will ye die" in despair?

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." It is true, indeed, that the charge which Jehovah brings against you is awful and terrible in the extreme:—"Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities!" But, instead of a curse, he immediately adds a blessing even to such a sinner:—"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." "Put me in remembrance" of Christ my Son; "let us plead together," the "exceedingly great and precious promises" given in, through, by, and with him: And let those pleadings, in which my soul delighteth, be begun on the part of the guilty; "declare thou" the sufferings which he bore for thee, the merits of his sacrifice and death, "that thou mayest be justified:" For such a pleading is certain to end in thy acquittal. (Isaiah xliii. 24, 26.) "For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is HOLY; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; lest the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I

create the fruit of the lips; PEACE, PEACE to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him." (Isaiah lvii. 15—19.)—Despair not then, for yet there is hope. If you are only willing at last to turn from your evil ways, there is surely mercy for you; and you shall find, that though "sin' has abounded, grace will much more abound." For though "the deserved wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Will ye die" through presumption? Are any of you influenced by a bold and daring spirit? Are you ready to reply to all the commands of God, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Do you "say unto God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?*" Do you open wide the mouth, and sport yourselves against the Most High? Do you laugh at the threatenings of God? Do you jest about the torments of hell? O what will ye do in the end thereof! What will ye do in the day of visitation, when "destruction shall come as a whirlwind," suddenly overwhelming you all? Are you able to meet God in the way of his judgments? Are you able to stand before him when he is angry? Can you contend with the Almighty? Have you an arm like God? Are you not afraid of his terrors? When he shakes the earth, or thunders in the heavens, and rides upon the storm; when his lightnings gleam upon their path, and his tempests sweep the air; do you not tremble? How then can you bear the thunder of his power in the judgment of the great day? Are you greedy of eternal pain? Are you not miserable enough now, without longing likewise to feel the miseries of the second death? Will ye die, purely because you are bent on destruction,

and determined to know the worst?—O that God, in the pitifulness of his mercy, and in the majesty of his power, may pluck you as brands from the burning! O thou, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and who willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; have compassion on those who are “hardening their hearts against thy fear,” and give us a demonstration of thy willingness to save the most obdurate, by stepping out of thine ordinary method of converting sinners: Seize them irresistibly by thy power, and constrain them henceforwards to yield to the influences of thy grace. “Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.” (1 Kings xviii. 37.)

Once more, I urge the inquiry, “*Why* will ye die?” Is it from a principle of enmity against God, because he will not save you *in your own way*? Is it because you cannot be saved in your sins, that you will not be saved at all? How utterly unreasonable is your conduct! You would wish to be a sinner on earth, and yet hereafter to be a saint in Heaven. When would you obtain your meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light? In the article of death? Would you be washed from the pollution of sin, just at the moment you enter the eternal world? If that were rendered a certainty, then would God encourage all sinners to postpone their salvation, and give them a licence to continue in iniquity to their very dying hour. Then would he act contrary to himself, and in opposition to the tenor of his written word, which cries in our ears,—“To-day, after so long a time, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men, every where, to

repent." And "now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." You see from these scriptures, that God cannot, consistently with his own word, universally save sinners in their last hour: Dying conversions are very rare indeed!

Those, however, who desire to enjoy the happiness of heaven hereafter, though they continue in a course of iniquity, seldom give themselves any concern about a meetness for heaven: All their hope is, that, by some means or other, though they know not how, they shall get there at last. But if the importance of a preparation for glory be urged, they will not consent to part from their sins: They choose death in the error of their ways. Will ye die then, because the condition of life is contrary to your desires, and opposed to the natural wishes of the heart; because it is said, "Turn and live?" Are you resolved rather to die, than turn from your evil ways? Then peradventure the death you have chosen shall become your portion, much sooner than is expected. Do not conclude, that, whatever becomes of you hereafter, you shall continue to enjoy your sins for a long season, before you feel their anguish and woe in the eternal world. "The wicked are driven away in their wickedness." "They shall not live out *half their days*." "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in mirth, and—in a moment—go down to the grave." "How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed

with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." These scriptures shew, that God never permits a sinner to continue long on earth, when he has finally "rejected the counsel of God against himself." Pharaoh and Judas soon went to their own place, after they had refused finally to turn from their sins to God.—"Why then will ye die," seeing there is only "a step between you and death?" *Why?* — since, whatever may have been your character or conduct up to this hour, at this moment every one may obtain grace from God to turn from his wickedness and live!" "Wherefore turn yourselves and live ye."

3. "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door!" He comes to make manifest by the light of eternity, before which the shadows and darkness of this present state vanish away, the truth of the oath which he hath sworn. He will now reward his saints according to a *gracious equity*. They were once in their sins: He called them to turn from the error of their ways. His grace inclined them to hearken to that call, God "working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure;" and then they, through his continued gracious influence, were diligent in "working out their own salvation with fear and trembling." The "fear and trembling" were the fruits of faith in that monitory scripture following the text, and others of a similar nature: "When I shall say to the righteous, that *he shall surely live*; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, *he shall die for it*." Thus they were saved, from first to last, "by grace through faith" in the threatenings, as well as in the promises of God. And now they stand

at the judgment-seat of Christ, to be rewarded "according to their works." O what a scene! to behold such an innumerable "multitude redeemed to God out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue," all of whom were once guilty sinners, and some of whom were once "the chief of sinners!" Their number, their glory, their expectations, their reward, pour a flood of light on this declaration which Jehovah made to mortals on earth, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live." If their death had been his delight, the joyous sentence would have never sounded from the eternal throne, "Come, ye blessed of my Father! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

The closing deed of time remains to be performed;—a deed which the Eternal Judge is so far from delighting in, that he defers it to the last;—the condemnation of the ungodly. They also shall be rewarded according to their works. And now the world will behold with astonishment the great, and holy, and wise, and gracious efforts that were made to accomplish the final salvation of all those who stand at the left hand of Christ. Not one is able to open his mouth and say, "I never had a Redeemer; and because I had no Redeemer, it was an *absolute impossibility* that I could be saved." The Judge was their Redeemer; else he would not have been their Judge; nor would they have had cause "to wail" for having "pierced him." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. We shall, therefore, *all* stand before the judgment seat of Christ;" because "he died, and rose, and revived again for all." (Rom. xiv. 9, 10.) Therefore having been their Redeemer, he judges them according to the tenor of the redemption-covenant;

“ he judges the secrets of men *according to the Gospel.*” The two grand laws by which he proceeds in his judicial character, are these : —“ He that believed and was baptized, shall be saved : But he that believed not, shall be damned.” “ Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.” It shall be seen, that each of the unhappy sinners had entrusted to him at least a talent of power, by which he might have “ turned from the evil of his ways,” and have become an heir of glory ; and that he now perishes, not for the *want of grace*, but for the *abuse of grace*, which was bestowed with the benevolent design of making him infinitely happy to all eternity. Therefore the last words that proceed from the lips of the Eternal Judge, awful as they are, may be prefaced with the solemn oath, ratifying and confirming for ever and for ever all his decrees :—“ As I the Lord Jehovah live, I had no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that they should have turned from their wickedness and live. —I called, but they refused : I stretched out my hand, but no man regarded :—They would *none* of my counsel ; they despised *all* my reproof :—Therefore, they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”—“ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

And now, brethren, with judgment, and eternity, and heaven, and hell, before your view, let me close the solemnities of this hour, with the impressive words of Moses :—“ See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil : I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : Therefore choose life, that both ye and your seed may live.” AMEN !

SERMON VII.

A FAST-DAY SERMON.*

Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.—AMOS iv. 11, 12.

WHAT nation, or what people, have ever existed upon the face of the earth, whose history has not afforded some striking proofs of the holy and righteous providence of God? In the scripture records of successive kingdoms, we every where discover, that the Lord is the “Governor among the nations.”—And were an inspired history to be produced of all the changes that have happened in the world since the commencement of the Christian era, in the rise and the fall of empires, the flourishing and the decay of kingdoms, the government of God would be as distinctly recognized in them, as in similar events of more ancient and remote ages.

The scripture no where presents a greater number of remarkable and convincing facts, illustrative of the pro-

* On the 10th day of October, in the year 1780, one of the most tremendous storms ever known in the West Indies, desolated Barbadoes. In memory of that terrible calamity, the 10th of October is annually appointed by the Governor to be observed as a day of fasting, and humiliation.—This discourse was delivered in the Methodist Chapel, in the year 1821.

vidential government of God, than we ourselves have witnessed in our own days. The divine hand may be visibly seen in all the occurrences of that protracted war which has been but recently terminated. Miseries have followed in the train of guilt. The scourge of God has gone from nation to nation, throughout Christian Europe; and, in a greater or lesser degree, all have felt its awful but just severity. The rod was not brought from afar; it was prepared at home. Men of infidel principles arose up within the bosom of France, and of other kingdoms; and, though they neither knew nor designed it, they became God's avengers of the blood of former saints. And the event has shewn, that, however severely God may punish for other individual or national crimes, the heaviest vengeance of all, though sometimes long delayed, falls on persecuting princes, and on a persecuting nation. The Bourbon ruler of France, whose predecessors had in numerous instances "taken counsel against the Lord and his Anointed," was "broken with a rod of iron, and dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel." In the city where flowed the blood of martyred Hugonots, in that same city was his blood shed.

At length peace has once more visited the earth. But lest any man should glory in men, God has brought it about so suddenly, so unexpectedly, and so marvellously, that we must all own it to be his doing. It has been his work to bring "perpetual destructions to an end."

But we need not take a wide range in search of proofs of the divine government: They meet us here at home. The West Indies are not out of the province of the Lord of the whole earth. Though the history of these islands is comparatively modern, running through a period of not more than three centuries, that history is fraught

with instruction, and teaches great moral lessons unto all the world. That those lessons may be understood by all nations, may have been the design of the Most High in permitting nearly every great European power to have possessions in the Western Hemisphere. England, France, Spain, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, have each their colony or colonies, in the West Indies. These Islands,—whether we refer to the larger ones, as Jamaica, St. Domingo, and Cuba; or to the lesser ones in our own Archipelago,—seem to have been selected as the theatre on which to exhibit public displays of the just and holy government of God. If it ought not to be affirmed, that the records of their colonization and prosperity are, all through, written with blood; and that this passage in Genesis (vi. 11.) might serve as a running title to every page: “The earth also was corrupt before God;” “and the earth was filled with violence;” this one fact that I am about to mention must be allowed by all to be indisputable: *Within so limited a period, no people have been so often visited with judgments of the most awful kind, as the inhabitants of these lands.* Earthquakes, some of them terrible, have shaken these islands, times without number. The very land has trembled with the load of guilt it bore. Hurricanes have often swept ruin across the face of the earth. Fevers have rapidly thinned or depopulated our towns. In all these visitations, the *chief* sufferers have been the civilized, European, Christian inhabitants. If then these things are so, and if God be righteous, what ought we to infer?

But too often the most awful visitations of God, in his judgments, fail of producing the desired effect. It was so with the Jews in the day of the prophet Amos.

Hence he complains, that, though God had repeatedly smitten them, they had not returned unto the Lord. Whether in this respect we have been like the Jews, impenitent and unyielding, it now becomes us on this day of fasting and public humiliation most seriously to set our hearts to know. I purpose by divine aid

I. To set before you an account of the past judgments of God on this colony:

II. To substantiate the awful charge:—"Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord:"

III. To apply the solemn and awakening message:—"Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: And because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

I. I am to set before you an account of the past judgments of God.

1. We have already assumed as fact, *that nothing happens in the world by chance*. This, I trust, few of you will be disposed to controvert. If the word "chance" be found in scripture, it does not mean an *unguided accident*, that merely fell out in a fortunate manner, independent of any directing or controlling influence from God: But it is used to denote a favourable occurrence, which, though apparently fortuitous *at first view*, does, when all its attendant circumstances are duly considered, strongly confirm the doctrine of divine providence. Thus in Ecclesiastes (ix. 11) we read:—"I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill: But *time and chance happeneth* to them all." The meaning of the passage is this: God's

providence does sometimes favour men with such unexpected happy occurrences, in so very seasonable, or timely, a manner, that he even frustrates the natural order of things thereby, so that the tardy win the race, and the weak gain the battle, and the simple and unlearned obtain wealth and favour; and *thus God Almighty's chances drive Heathenish chances out of the world.*

“Affliction then cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.” (Job v. 6.) The providence of God, visible as it is, in the process of vegetation, is still more visible in his moral government of man. The fruits of the earth do “spring out of the ground,” with a great degree of regularity. We can see their origin, and calculate on their increase, because “while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.” (Gen. viii. 22.) But affliction springs often from hidden causes; and how long it shall continue, or by what means it will be removed, is wholly unknown to man. In those afflictions in which the outward cause is visible, we must nevertheless acknowledge the hand of God. His hand puts every event in motion; or his finger points out the direction it shall take, when he permits it to be brought to pass. Job was deeply sensible of this truth: Therefore in his heavy losses, he did not exclaim, “The Sabeans and Chaldeans have taken away my property; the lightning has consumed it; and the tempest has bereaved me of my children:” But he reverently and devoutly owned, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: Blessed be the name of the Lord!” O how truly is Job denominated a “perfect man,” according to his dispensation, when he

so eminently observed what is to us a Christian precept, "In every thing give thanks!"

If individual afflictions come from God, so also do public calamities. But between individual and public calamities, there is this remarkable difference, which ought ever to be borne in mind: Individual afflictions are no proofs of God's displeasure; for the heaviest trials may be the lot of the holiest saints. "Take, my brethren," says St. James, "the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and patience." (James v. 10.) And Jesus Christ was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." But public calamities are always tokens of God's righteous anger against the nations or communities on whom they fall: Those public distresses, therefore, may in every case be properly called, *The judgments of God*. Solomon has given us an universal maxim: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. xiv. 34.)

"Shall there" then "be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6.) Shall the sword go through a land, and God hath not bidden it? If there be "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision;" is it not because it is "the day of the Lord in the valley of decision?" If the field or valley of slaughter, be called "the valley of Jehoshaphat," that is, *Jehovah's Judgment*, is it not because Jehovah "sits there to judge all the nations round about?" If he assemble warriors as harvest-men, and command them to begin the work of execution:—"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow:—Does he not also assign the reason?, "for their wickedness is great." (Joel iii. 9—14.)

As war, pestilence, and famine, are each the scourge of God's wrath, so also are the whirlwind and the storm. "God distributeth sorrows in his anger." The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. "He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots." "He maketh a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder." "He directeth his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth; he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he which we cannot comprehend. He saith to the great rain of his strength, *Be thou on the earth.* By watering he wearieth the thick cloud: He scattereth his bright cloud: And it is turned round about by his counsels; that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy." (Job.) "The stormy wind fulfilleth his word." (Psalm cxlviii. 8.) What a fine description of Jehovah's majesty and power, as governing the storm, have we in one of the Psalms appointed for this day's service: "The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: Coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub and did fly: Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him, his thick clouds passed,

hail-stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils." (Psalm xviii. 7—15.) After the devastation of such a storm as is here pictured to our view, how justly may it be said to spectators: "Behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth!" (Psalm xlvi. 8.)

2. The Judge of all the earth has, in divers instances, visited this island with his desolating judgments. On the last day of August, 1675, when this island had been colonized about fifty years, a most tremendous hurricane reduced it to almost utter ruin. "Throughout the whole island," says one of your own historians,* "neither house nor tree was left standing, except the few that were sheltered by some neighbouring hill or cliff: And," he continues, "the next morning, when the storm was abated, *the whole island afforded a lively, but terrible, idea of the tenth Egyptian plague of old.*" And he mentions an affecting history of "one Humphrey Waterman, then an infant, who was found as soon as the tempest was abated, with his arm broken, and in that condition sucking the breast of his dead mother, who had been killed by the lightning or the storm." By that awful visitation of God, scores, if not hundreds, of lives,

* The Rev. Mr. Hughes, for several years a Rector of one of the parishes in Barbadoes. His history is exceedingly well written, and very interesting. I cite from him. The same events are also mentioned in Poyer's History of Barbadoes, which is more recent. Mr. Poyer was Clerk of one of the parish churches; but a man of good plain sense, and not deficient in education.

were destroyed; and scarcely an individual in the colony, perhaps not one, escaped without some loss in his family, or property, or health.

Fifty years after that day of ruin and death, in the year 1731, this island was again visited with the rod of correction, though not in so severe a manner. The hurricane was dreadful; several houses were demolished, and some large trees were torn up by the roots. "The waters of the sea roared and were troubled; the mountains shook with the swelling thereof." But God generally spared the life of man.

God was not thus gracious on that memorable day of 1780, the calamities of which we are now called to remember with fasting and humiliation. Of the awful tempest which then suddenly brought death to many, in its most terrific form, there are still several living witnesses. Forty-one years have passed away since they beheld it; but the most forgetful memory has a distinct and lively recollection of the horrors of that storm. With some of the aged of this colony I have conversed concerning it; and they all agree, that the land was a land of universal mourning. Grief was depicted in every countenance, and it appeared as though joy and gladness would return no more. That day was "a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." (Zeph. i. 15.) Then the Lord "shook the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." (Hag. ii. 6.) And "he had his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm; and the clouds were the dust of his feet. The mountains quaked at him, and the hills melted, and the earth was burned at his presence:" While all the inhabitants of the land kept an

awful silence before him ! (Nah. i. 3, 5 : and Hab. ii. 20.)

What language can describe, what mind imagine, the terrible grandeur of that scene ! The storm was conceived in silence, and ushered in by a dead, deceitful calm. The heavens gathered blackness ; the clouds rolled heavily along the collecting magazines of wrath ; and their portentous rumbling, and the fierce glare of the lightning, shook every heart with fear. Fire, and hail, and rain, and vapour, and smoke, all hung over the guilty land : They waited for the signal to come rustling from the skies. Then God commanded the stormy wind to fulfil his word. Like a restless fugitive it flew all round, East, West, North, South, dashing together the conflicting elements in the air, from whence torrents of wrath were poured forth in every direction. Darkness came before it was night ; night shrouded that dismal darkness, and the land seemed covered over as with the shadow of death ! How dismal that night ! Terror and dismay sat on every countenance. Every one feared to be alone ; and yet no one dared stir to seek his fellow. Every one thought his place, a place of danger ; but a place of safety none knew where to find. "Would God it were morning," was the wish of every heart ! Then the haughty daughters of pride rent their garments, and sat as in dust and ashes. Then the stubborn knee was bowed in prayer ; and the eye that knew not how to weep, streamed, while the cry, "O spare me !," ascended up to heaven ! And the guilty blasphemer groaned from his heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner !" Ah ! What would have been their end, if God had "laughed at their calamity and mocked when their fear came !" What their end, if God had irrevocably decreed, "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver

them in the day of the Lord's wrath ; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy : For he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land !" (Zeph. i. 18.)

But God had pity ! He "overthrew some of you with a terrible overthrow ;" for it resembled the "overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah ;" and the "rest were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning." (Amos iv. 11.) Instead of sweeping all away at a stroke, some were spared : And the colony presented a spectacle similar to the camp of Israel, when Aaron stood up in the midst of the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. The first employment of the living was "to bury their dead out of their sight." And afterward, instead of returning to their accustomed labour, and "eating their bread by the sweat of their brow," it became necessary to erect a temporary shelter, while for days and weeks they subsisted on fragments of food, until God again did them good, by causing the earth to yield her fruit. Nor was it until several years had past away, that the island resumed its original appearance of fertility, beauty, and prosperity.

Need I remind you of a more recent judgment, which rather hung threatening over the land, than spent its fury upon us ? Only recollect the volcanic eruption which took place in a neighbouring island a few years ago ;*

* The Island of St. Vincent's. This island is from 70 to 80 miles distant from Barbadoes. At the eastern part of the island, is the lofty volcanic mountain, called The Souffrier. At the top of this mountain, the crater has two mouths ; each of which is at least half a mile in circumference. There had been no eruption for about a century till the year 1811. After many threatening symptoms, about midnight it burst forth. The top of the mountain seemed to be all in a flame. Liquid streams flowed over the sides, and presently filled up and stopped the

when the Lord rained dust from heaven upon us, as upon the land of Egypt of old. The words of Isaiah were then literally accomplished: "We waited for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walked in darkness. We groped for the wall like the blind, and we groped as if we had no eyes. We stumbled at noon-day as in the night; we were in desolate places as dead men." (Isaiah lix. 9, 10.) How were the houses of prayer thronged on that day! And some who now

course of a large river, and completely buried one estate under its ashes, with the whole of the buildings. Large stones were thrown out to sea a considerable distance; while an immense quantity of fine red particles was continually cast upwards, and by the current of air borne towards Barbadoes. In Barbadoes, a noise had been heard throughout the night, like the firing of cannon; and the inhabitants concluded, that a naval engagement was taking place. But in the morning early, the sun's rays darting through the clouds of dust, caused him to have a fiery, blood-like appearance. In the meantime the dust began to fall, like powder, all over the colony. The heavens became darkened, till in about an hour after sun-rise, there was a total darkness. The dust descended more and more in the midst of the darkness. Every one felt a deep alarm; and many thought the day of judgment was come. Lanterns were lighted; but the darkness was so gross and palpable, that the light could not diffuse itself in the open air; so that the people were obliged to grope their way to places of worship. Our chapel was thronged throughout the day; and Mr. Whitworth, the Missionary, was completely exhausted by continuing in prayer and exhortation. It was not till between one and two of the afternoon, that the light began again to dawn on Barbadoes; and about three, the dust ceased to fall. It then lay on the face of the island; in some places two, in some three, and in some four inches deep. It was a merciful providence for St. Vincent's, that the clouds of dust were carried towards the East; for the greater part must have fallen in the sea, before they reached Barbadoes. Had they taken an opposite direction, Kingstown, the principal town in St. Vincent's, would have probably been buried, and the whole island ruined. In St. Vincent, so great was the alarm, that for two days and nights, our chapel, which was then the only place of worship in the town, was constantly crowded with the people.

scoff at those who worship God, were then moved by fear even to bow the knee in his presence, and to implore his mercy.

That judgment had scarcely passed away, when God permitted another calamity to occur. I refer to the year 1816. While you had the most flattering prospects of abundant produce, your own servants, wickedly, and in opposition to every precept of Christianity, rose against you: They plundered your property, and devastated your estates, though they were restrained from taking away your lives. I repeat it: Their conduct was sinful in the sight of God; and *in direct violation of every precept of Christianity*. But alas! Did they know Christianity? Had they not been, in a vast majority of instances, either wholly neglected, or kept back from learning the fear of the Lord? And is it not a fact, worthy of some attention, that of those who had been religiously instructed, whether by the clergy, or ministers of inferior name, *not one* was found partaking with the guilty; or so much as bidding them, "God speed?"

Have you not also been visited with a yet more recent calamity? Call to mind the torrents of rain that descended in 1817, and flooded your lands, and checked the progress of vegetation, and caused much of your produce to die in the earth.

And, even to the present day, do we not feel the rod of God? Else, why is this complaining in our streets, this stagnation of trade, this decay of prosperity, this general dissatisfaction of mind? Whatever be the secondary causes of these evils, it is plain that God has a controversy with us: And that controversy will not end, till we forsake our public sins, and heartily turn unto the Lord.

Now, after this review of the past judgments of God, it is impossible that any one but the most obdurate can persevere in saying, "God hath forgotten: He hideth his face; he will never see it. God will not require it." And it is evident that every heart ought to be "moved with fear," when, notwithstanding such awful visitations, the charge is still brought against us:—"Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord."

II. I proceed to substantiate the charge:—*It is God's charge and not mine.*

1. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: They ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?* Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen?—to loose the bands of wickedness,—to undo the heavy burdens,—and to let the oppressed go free,—and that ye break every yoke? Is it not—to deal thy bread to the hungry,—and that thou bring the poor

that are cast out to thy house,—when thou seest the naked that thou cover him,—and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ?” (Isaiah lviii. 1—7.)

In reference to the storm of 1780, it may perhaps be admitted, that some temporary reformation of those who immediately suffered was produced ; but if it were so, the good has not continued to the present generation. “ Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see.” (Isaiah xxvi. 11.) Could we sin more, could we do more wickedly, if we had never been visited with any judgments at all ? Which of the commandments have we not broken ? Is it not counted a reproachful thing to “ fear God and to keep his commandments ?” Doth not “ he that departeth from evil make himself a prey ?”

2. “ Because of *swearing* the land mourneth.” (Jer. xxiii. 10.) What a variety of oaths are used ! How often is the name of the Most High taken in vain, by mortals who thoughtlessly or impiously exclaim with almost every breath, “ Lord Almighty,” “ Lord God,” “ Christ God,” “ By Christ,” “ By God,” and so on ? How many lovers of oaths, but how few lovers of prayer, are found amongst us ! Were an angel commissioned to go through the land, as in ancient times through the land of Egypt, and mark out for destruction and death every blasphemer ; and for preservation every one who truly feared the Lord ; what multitudes would want a grave, and how few would remain to commit them to the tomb !

3. “ Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ? who hath contentions ? who hath babbling ? who hath wounds without cause ? who hath redness of eyes ? They that tarry long at the wine : They that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,

when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things." (Prov. xxiii. 29—33.) See how these two evils, *drunkenness* and *adultery*, abound!

How many are there who "drink wine with a song!" (Isaiah xxiv. 9.) "They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." (Isaiah xxviii. 7, 8.) Yet they "say to the seers, *See not*; and to the prophets, *Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.*" Thus they "despise the word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon." (Isaiah xxx. 10—12.) How many are there who will not admit a man to be a drunkard, if he be not quite a beast; who call intoxication, cheerfulness, sprightliness, hilarity of spirit, mirth! It is with them, as it was with the Jews in the days of Isaiah,—while they were "drawing iniquity with cords of vanity, and sinning as it were with a cart rope;—while they were mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink;—they called evil *good*, and good *evil*; they put darkness for *light*, and light for *darkness*; they put bitter for *sweet*, and sweet for *bitter.*" (Isaiah v. 18—22.) Yea, is there not one occasion of intoxication of which it is a shame to speak in a Christian land? Is it not a customary remark, that many attend funerals for the sake of the strong drink that at such times is

given? Ah! I have too often seen the drunkard tottering at the grave of his acquaintance, or of his friend! I have heard him jest about death, while looking on a human skull!

4. And as to *adultery*, how pointed are the words of the prophet Jeremiah! (xxiii. 10.) “The land is full of adulterers.” Of those who have entered into the sacred engagements of the married state, how few are found faithful to the wife of their youth! Are not the married as the unmarried? Do they not maintain their harlots? Have they not children of every shade of colour? And do they not thereby cause endless jealousies and heart-burnings, which suffer them to have no enjoyment of domestic life? Know ye of no instance in which the female slave supplants the wife? And wilt thou, after such admitted familiarity, gravely maintain that for another man to sit down to meat with a Christian slave, would endanger the peace of the community? that it is necessary to keep up the distinctions in society? Then why dost thou, O man, habitually break them down by the reigning power of lust?

5. And what shall we say of that species of adultery, which the scripture calls “Fornication?” Of the whoremonger, whom the apostle classes with adulterers, when he says?, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” (Heb. xiii. 4.) And what saith the same apostle concerning the end of such sinners? “Know ye not,”—is it not a plain, self-evident truth—“Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” But, as though he were aware that such sins have a peculiar deceptive influence, he immediately adds, “Be not deceived: Neither fornicators, nor idolaters,

nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi 9, 10.) And yet in the face of such plain declarations of scripture, how many are there, who, beside living in the sin, will either absolutely justify, or partially excuse their practices! "What difference is there," say they, "between us, and married persons, save this, that the marriage ceremony has not been performed?"

To this boasted argument, so often repeated, and so confidently rested on by many to the ruin of their souls, it becomes our duty to give a full and decisive answer, that whether men will hear or forbear, we may be clear of their blood. Let me "speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say."

(1.) The argument is not true in itself; it carries falsehood on the very face of it. For you intimate, that the *only* difference lies here, that "the marriage ceremony has not been performed." Now that is not the only difference. The woman is not respected by yourselves as *a wife*, but treated as *a servant*; or, in some few instances, doated on with a blind fondness, and indulged to a degree that brings a man's temporal circumstances to the verge of ruin. She is not respected even by others, who live in like sin; nor by the domestics, who look with envy on one who, from being their equal, is raised to a large share of authority over them. And sometimes on the domestics she looks with jealousy and suspicion, lest she should be supplanted by a rival. Here is another point of difference: No man can put away his wife for any cause save adultery; but one who sustains not that relation, can be put away whenever her maintainer pleases, and without any cause at all. Again, her

society is not enjoyed, but stolen; and her offspring are counted base and disreputable; a living reproach both to him who bears the name of father, and to her who is called by the tender name of mother. Is it of such a progeny that the scripture speaks, "Thy children shall be like olive plants round about thy table?" And will you yet have the boldness to say, that the performance of the marriage rite constitutes the *only* difference between you and those who are united in that covenant engagement? Look at the facts that have been stated, and know.

(2.) The argument proceeds on a false assumption; namely, that the marriage union is *no more than a ceremony*; and therefore to be but slightly regarded. The scripture teaches us, that it is an ordinance of divine institution, co-eval with the origin of man: It is therefore substantially a *religious, sacred, and divine institution*. The ceremonial of it consists only in *the mode observed*, which varies in different nations. But as it regards marriage itself, we read: "He which made them, male and female, at the beginning said, *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: And they twain shall be one flesh*. Wherefore, they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not *man* put asunder." (Matt. xix. 4—6.) It is impossible for any language more strongly to declare, that from the commencement of the world, marriage has had for its sanction, the express appointment of God. Hence the law was renewed from Sinai: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." It is acknowledged by all the prophets, and confirmed by Christ and his apostles. Jesus wrought his first miracle at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. The

passage from the Hebrews: "Marriage is honourable in all," has been already cited; and nearly the last words of the Bible, as spoken by Christ himself to John, are, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. xxii. 15.) Now from these scriptures we see, that what you call *mere ceremony* is every thing: It is *that which constitutes the relation, and without which the relation cannot exist.* Yea, yourselves are conscious that the relation exists not; hence, to use the expression of an apostle, your offspring are considered "as bastards, not as sons."

(3.) While the scripture sanctions the marriage union, it condemns every other kind of union in the most absolute and unqualified language. Recollect our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria. Addressing himself to her conscience: "Go," said he, "call thy husband, and come hither." The woman, smitten with a sense of guilt, "answered and said, *I have no husband.*" Did Jesus reply?, *Thou hast; there is nothing wanting but the marriage ceremony; bring him hither, and I will perform that.* No! He deepened the conviction of guilt by answering, "Thou hast well said, *I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; but he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband:—In that saidst thou truly.*" (John iv. 16—18.) Again, I refer you to the plain words of St. Paul, (1 Cor. vii. 2,) "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Is it not manifest, that, in every union where there is not the relation of *husband and wife*, there is fornication? Hear, yet once more, the unqualified declaration of the same apostle: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed

undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Surely the apostle, after such a strong saying, might have taken up the words of Christ: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."—(John xv. 22.)

But it will be urged, "Did not men anciently take a second wife? Does not the scripture say so?"

Yes, it relates the fact, but no where approves the practice. The scripture relates the existence of many evils; but their existence does not alter the law of God; and as to the will of God concerning marriage, that is so clearly and definitively made known in the gospel, that to "abstain from fornication" has from the beginning been considered imperative on all who bear the name of Christian. We conclude then, that adultery and fornication are sins, because they are clearly transgressions of God's holy law.

6. Now if those evils abound, does the sin of *sabbath-breaking* prevail to a less awful extent? Behold, the day of the Lord is made a day of drudgery and commerce by the bulk of the population; and they who are exempt from bodily labour, do on that day enter their counting-house, and transact their mercantile concerns; while some make it a day of visiting and receiving visits; "finding their own pleasure, and thinking their own thoughts." On the sabbath, have not our public streets the appearance of a fair? And were a Mahommedan or Heathen to land on our shores on that day, and to enter our churches, and read the law conspicuously placed over the altar,—"The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy

stranger that is within thy gates ;”—on passing through the town, and beholding *all manner of work* carried on with continual noise and uproar, would not such a man conclude, that God’s law had been publicly exhibited in his house, purely to insult the Lawgiver, and to shew how little his authority was regarded? Is not this sin of sabbath-breaking at the root of all other sins? Has not the cry thereof entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts? Is it not the grand cause of bringing down the judgments of God upon us? But have we profited by those judgments? *Though we fast this day, will the very next sabbath be less profaned?* And can such hypocritical fastings be acceptable unto God? May he not repeat to us his former declaration to Israel?,—“The calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.” (Isaiah 1. 13.) Is not the charge then substantiated? “Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord :

But it was the peculiar characteristic of that generation, which lived in the days of the prophet Malachi, that they went beyond their fathers in a confidence of their own righteousness, though they were, if possible, more corrupt and depraved in heart and life. Hence they heard, with astonishment, the admonitions of the prophet, though he referred to the plainest and most apparent evidences of guilt, that were manifest to every one who would but seriously consider the reality of things. A sad proof this of the *blinding*, as well as the *hardening* nature of sin. I shall refer to a few instances, taken from the book of the prophet Malachi.

7. “Thus saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. But ye say, *Wherein have we despised thy name?*” (i. 6.) “Ye offer polluted

bread upon mine altar." And yet in the face of this glaring fact, they asked with amazement, "Wherein have we polluted thee?" (i. 7.) Again, "This have ye done;"—the reference is to plain fact:—"This have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand. Yet ye say, *Wherefore?*" (ii. 13, 14.) "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, *Wherein have we wearied him?* When ye say, *Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them;* or, *Where is the God of judgment?*" (ii. 17.) "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts. But ye said, *Wherein shall we return?*" (iii. 7.) Are we not already righteous? How are we to return unto God?—Again it was said to them, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, *Wherein have we robbed thee?*" (iii. 8.) "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, *What have we spoken so much against thee?*" (iii. 13.)

Are there no points of agreement, my brethren, between you in these various instances, and the ancient Israelites? Can ye indeed bear the truth? Or must I forbear to draw the parallel, lest in the conclusion I should find a just, but keen, and powerful application of the truth, in the words of another inspired Jewish teacher?—"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: As your fathers did, so do ye." (Acts vii. 51.)

8. One thing more must be declared, and then I have

delivered my own soul. I cite again from the prophet Malachi. (iii. 15.) "And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered." So that as St. Paul saith: (Rom. i. 32.) "Knowing the judgment of God," we not only "commit such things" as are evil, "but *have pleasure in them that do them.*" Hence one might repeat the inquiry of the prophet Jeremiah; "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush." (Jer. vi. 15.) It is a proof that men have no shame, when they feel little or no concern about concealing their iniquities. Were the swearer to close every avenue of his dwelling, and "curse God" in secret;—were the drunkard to retire to an inner chamber, and shut the doors upon himself, that none might see a human swine;—were it customary for harlots, as in the days of Judah, to cover themselves with a vail when they appeared abroad;—or, were the adulterer only to approach his lurking-places in the gloom of midnight, retiring before the morning could disclose his guilty deeds;—then might we own, that the last symptom of a reprobate mind is not yet discoverable,—an incapability of blushing for "abomination." But when the reverse is the case, the conclusion is forced upon us, that many even "glory in their shame." I appeal to your own consciences, Is not sin counted a reputable thing? Here is the proof: Let a man live according to custom, and he passes without much observation; but let him live "soberly, righteously, and godly," and he becomes at once "a proverb of reproach and shame."

And now I would ask, Is not the solemn charge, not

of an erring mortal, but of the eternal Jehovah, fully substantiated?—"Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." If *there be no returning to the Lord, where there is no forsaking of sin*, by what argument shall we seek to prove, that we have returned unto him? Why should we vindicate ourselves? Why be influenced by the Spirit of one, of whom we read in the scriptures, that he, "willing to justify himself, said, *And who is my neighbour?*" Would it not be better, on this day of professed humiliation, to humble our souls truly—"by falling on our face," and crying out,— "Thou, O Lord, art righteous, though we have done wickedly both we and our fathers?" Especially when we remember that "for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still!" "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" "Therefore this will I do unto thee, O Israel: And because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

III. Let me apply this solemn and awakening message.

1. It expresses the divine determination in a very significant manner. It is introduced with a "*therefore*;" shewing that God has a reason for all his procedures with men in the way of judgment. "Therefore:"—because "ye have not returned unto me:" Because when I have "stricken you, ye have revolted more and more. "Therefore, THUS will I do unto thee, O Israel!" What is the import of this threatening which is expressed in such a very general manner, no one particular evil being specified? There is a fearful significance of meaning in the indefinite denunciation:

“**T**HUS will I do unto thee.” It is as though God had said unto the Jews: “My future judgments shall not be like the past. In the former years of visitation I also made known my goodness; in wrath I remembered mercy. But in those which are approaching, I will make the wickedness of the wicked to come to an end, by bringing wrath upon them to the uttermost.”

Accordingly we find that thus it happened unto impenitent Israel. “Fill ye up then,” said Christ, “the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: And some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.” (Matt. xxiii. 32—36.) “There shall be great tribulation,”—when God fulfils that word against Israel, “**T**HUS will I do unto thee,”—“such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, *there should no flesh be saved.*” (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.) In those declarations of the Saviour, you have the meaning of the threatening brought to view; and the total destruction of Jerusalem, and the final dispersion of the Jewish nation, shew how awfully it was fulfilled.

An exact knowledge of futurity is wisely hidden from the view of mortals. But from the history of events that have happened in the world from its creation

to the present time, and from an attentive observation of the moral government of God, we may be justified in remarking, that when God begins a controversy with a people, he will not give over that controversy, till it issue, either in their conversion, or in their destruction. Judgment shall follow judgment till he humbles or consumes. A cessation of judgments is only a renewed "space" given "for repentance." If, during that time, men know the day of their merciful visitation, and turn to God, He will delight to pardon and forgive: But if they repent not, heavier and still heavier judgments shall come, till the Lord "utterly overthrow them as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." It is now forty-one years since that dreadful tempest scowled over this island, and made the land to appear "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." (Job x. 22.) We have only had, in the intervening time, lesser visitations. But God, has not spent all his arrows. His arm is not shortened, nor his power diminished; he is Almighty still: And if we "despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads us to repentance;" are we not, after our "hardness and impenitency of heart, treasuring up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" (Rom. ii. 4, 5.)

2. "Prepare then to meet thy God" in the whirlwind and the storm! "Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." (Isaiah xxix. 6.) "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious

beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet. For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: For I have heard from the Lord God of Hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth." (Isaiah xxviii. 1—3; xxi. 22.) "Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: It shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: In the latter days ye shall consider it." (Jer. xxx. 23, 24.)

Only four years are past since the Lord visited the Leeward Islands with the tempestuous hurricane. Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Have ye not read of Tortola? Of St. Bartholomew's? Of St. Martin's? How those colonies have been made a wilderness? And that very tempest began to collect amongst these most easterly colonies. For some time it hung hovering over Barbadoes, and threatened us with the calamities of 1780: But God in great mercy spared us. He only permitted the great rain of his strength to flood this island; while the storm was directed to spend its ordained fury over the sister colonies. But will God spare for ever? Will he always threaten only?

Do you still continue impenitent? More impenitent? More hardened? More reprobate? "Prepare to meet your God;" for he hath declared "the day of vengeance is in mine heart;" (Isaiah lxiii. 4;) and if in his heart, though you discern not the tokens of that vengeance, it is preparing, and God longs to execute it. He will bring it suddenly, and in a more awful manner than your ears have heard, or than your fathers have declared unto you. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and *destroyed them all*. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and *destroyed them all*. *Even thus* shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." (Luke xvii. 26—30.)

"Prepare to meet thy God" in death! Whether a tempest, or a fever, sweep you from the land of the living; or a more common affliction bring you down to the grave, the day of dissolution is at hand. That is a very striking expression in St. Luke's Gospel: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Death then is a requiring of the soul: The body is not wanted until the morning of the resurrection, but the soul must immediately enter on its eternal portion of misery or woe. Hear ye then the solemn message, Prepare for death! He is coming; make ready to meet him! Unclothe for the grave; pass into the invisible world; meet there the God of the spirits of all flesh;

and hear him utter the awful charge, "Yet have ye not returned unto me."

Prepare to meet God as the Judge of quick and dead. "Behold! He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen!" "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? At his presence the heavens and the earth flee away, and no place is found for them." He is seated upon the throne of his glory; he calls all nations to appear before him. "Prepare to meet" your holy and righteous Judge! Go forth, ye who have been unhumbled by the most awful calamities, unsubdued under the chastisements of his hand, and learn, at his tribunal, the fearful result of neglecting to return unto the Lord. It is now too late to return: Nor will the grace of repentance now be given. For when "the heaven departs as a scroll when it is rolled together, and when every mountain and island is removed out of its place;" no influence of the Spirit will be imparted to those who have died in their sins, on which account they will be *incapable of even desiring repentance*. They will have no desire for godly sorrow; though through anguish they may desire to avert their punishment. Hence they will cry out "to the mountains and rocks, *Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*" (Rev. vi. 16, 17.)

3. O that you may be awakened to seek the Lord while he may be found; and to call upon him while he is near! To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not

your hearts ! Let me exhort you each to-day, while it is called to-day, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. Sin only exposes to the displeasure and anger of Almighty God. And though he is willing to pardon, he pardons none but the penitent. Leaving then the conduct of others, let every man look into his own heart, and examine his own life ; and smiting upon his breast, let every one say, “ God be merciful to *me*, a sinner !” O that God would make us a congregation of penitents ! O that the word we have heard might cause us to be “ moved with fear,” and become “ the power of God to our salvation !” “ Come, and let us return unto the Lord : For he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.” Let us take with us words of confession and supplication, while we turn unto the Lord ; and let us say unto him, “ *Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously : So will we render the calves of our lips.*” Let us own our personal, our family, our national sins, and ask grace to “ amend our ways and doings,” through the merits of Him who bled and died for us, for our children, for our countrymen, and for all the world. If ye thus return unto the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, to hearken to his voice, and to obey his commandments always, it shall be your righteousness ; and the services of this day shall be called an acceptable fast unto the Lord. Then, “ from this day will he bless you :” He will open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Then shall the earth yield her increase : And God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us ; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

May you, by timely repentance, avert the impending evil and enjoy the promised good! May you, throughout all your succeeding generations, be saved from the stormy wind and tempest! May you, and your children, and your children's children, never witness calamities like those we have this day commemorated! "The Lord preserve you from all evil; the Lord preserve your souls! The Lord preserve your going out and coming in, from this time forth, and for evermore!"
AMEN and AMEN!

SERMON VIII.

*METHODISM EXPLAINED.**

The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.—JOHN xviii. 19, 20.

THE history connected with this scripture is exceedingly interesting. Jesus Christ, having been betrayed at midnight, by one of his own disciples, to those who were sent to apprehend him, was brought before Caiaphas, who was that year “the high priest” of the Jewish nation. Before him Christ stood as a prisoner in bonds, and was questioned relative to “his disciples and his doctrine.” In this private conference, however, our Lord gave no direct answer to his inquiries; but replied, “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.” Jesus undoubtedly perceived something insidious in the high priest’s questions; hence he added, “*Why* askest thou

* This discourse was delivered to a very crowded audience, at one of the anniversaries of the opening of the new Methodist Chapel in Barbadoes; the author does not distinctly recollect the year. The chapel was a solid, stone building, and had not been erected quite four years when demolished.

me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: Behold they know what I have said." There was nothing justly offensive in such a reply; yet the conduct of our Saviour's enemies shews that they who have wrong on their side, often find something plausible in the circumstances connected with their own violence, as a justification of their conduct. For "when he had *thus* spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, *Answerest thou the high priest so?*" "Jesus answered him, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?*"—However, it was easier to revile and to smite the Saviour, than to find any thing to lay to his charge.

The last sentence in our text must be understood in a qualified sense: "In secret have I said nothing;" that is, nothing contrary to what I have taught in public. It must be admitted, that Jesus Christ sometimes taught his disciples privately; but on those occasions, his instructions were of the same nature and tendency, as those which he gave to the multitudes who publicly attended on his ministry. To his disciples he explained, in a clearer and more familiar manner, the same doctrines which he spake openly to the world.

Christianity, then, had not in its origin, nor had it in its progress in the apostles' days, any secrets that could not be divulged; or any impenetrable mysteries with which none but the initiated were made acquainted: But from the commencement, the whole pure and simple system stood open to inspection, and not only allowed, but even courted investigation.

Such being the genius of the Christian religion, amongst the various denominations who profess to have

embraced it, there ought to be, in this particular, an agreement with 'it. Every part of their economy, and the whole of the doctrines they maintain, ought to be publicly stated; that men may be able to judge of their moral and religious tendency. Secresy in religious matters is always a strong indication of some radical corruption; for which reason, it ought ever to awaken suspicion: But whenever a Christian society manifests a willingness to make an open and honest declaration of all that is known, and believed, and practised, suspicion should not be allowed any longer to remain. What is candidly professed, ought with candour to be received.

Influenced by such sentiments, we have judged it right, and, on the return of another anniversary of the opening of this house of prayer, seasonable also, to lay before you an impartial statement of the work in which we are engaged. We are Methodist Missionaries from choice; and, because we love Methodism, we labour to promote it, being convinced, that, however reproachfully the term may be used by many, it is only another name for SCRIPTURAL CHRISTIANITY. *It is Christianity revived amongst professing Christians.* Nor would it be difficult to produce evidence, that there is in these days a general agreement between the rise and progress of Methodism, and the rise and progress of Christianity. The first Christians were denominated "a sect" in their day, as we are now; but they had not, nor have we, any *sectarian views* in the invidious application of the term; for, though "a sect every where spoken against," our principles are catholic, and our one maxim, which we regard as extending to all mankind, is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

That I may enter as fully and extensively into the

subject, as the time allotted for this service will allow, I proceed to direct your attention,

I. To the origin of Methodism, and its increase in the world.

II. To the more immediate object of our Mission to the West Indies.

III. To the doctrines we believe and preach.

IV. To the discipline by which our Societies are governed.

V. To the manner in which the Missionaries are prepared for their work.

VI. The means by which they are supported. And,

VII. The success which has attended their labours.

I. The origin of Methodism, and its increase in the world.

1. Methodism first took its rise at the University of Oxford, in the year 1729. Whether it be good or evil, it is of college growth. The name "Methodist" was first given to the Rev. Charles Wesley, and afterwards to his brother, the Rev. John Wesley, and a few pious students who associated with them; because they had agreed to observe *an exact method* in their studies, and in their general conduct. They simply lived as Jesus Christ would have done had he been at Oxford; and, for that reason, they soon became "a proverb of reproach and shame." Yet the name is perfectly harmless; though many are accustomed to associate with it a train of dismal ideas of heresy, schism, and rebellion: Yea, the name has now become the most honourable appellation in the world, next to that of Christian; for it is no longer confined to the people whose it is *by right*, but is commonly applied to every man who "lives soberly, and

godly, and righteously, in this present world." Every Church-of-England man, *who by the aid of grace tries to observe his baptismal vow*, is to all intents and purposes a Methodist; for, according to the true, original application of the term, a Methodist is nothing more than *an improved Churchman*. And though, in the course of years, through a variety of unforeseen and providential circumstances, the Methodists as a body have become separatists from the church in practice, *though not Dissenters in principle*; yet do we rejoice to know, that instrumentally we have been the means of reviving true Christianity in that church which has forced us from her communion: And with whatever jealousy some of her members may watch our proceedings, in this will we always glory, that our love and veneration for the Establishment remains unalterable, and our desire for her purity unceasing. "Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces!"

2. One thing connected with the origin and spread of Methodism cannot be too strongly insisted on; because it is a satisfactory reply to an objection which has been often repeated against the conduct of the venerable Wesley. If his character be found unimpeachable, his *motives* are attacked; and he is described as having been an *ambitious* man! Ambitious of what? Of honour? Was he not "made as the filth of the earth, and as the offscouring of all things?" Would not *you* be offended, if any one should so far give you a share of his honour, as simply to call you *Methodist*? Would not you labour vehemently to clear yourselves of the charge of being one of "Wesley's followers?" At all events, then, his honour was of a different kind from that for which you have a relish! Was he ambitious of

ease? "He was in labours more abundant!" Of riches? "He coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." No, says one, *But he was ambitious of being the head of a party!* Then God Almighty, instead of "taking the wise in his own craftiness," was a co-worker with him; and the ambitious Wesley was correct, when, in his expiring moments, he exclaimed, "The best of all is, *God is with us!* The best of all is, *God is with us!*" O the blessedness of such ambition! What comfort it gives a man in a dying hour! "Let me die the death of the ambitious, [if this be ambition,] and let my last end be like his!"

3. "AMBITION!" It fills me with amazement to conceive how any man can read a correct history of Methodism, and suffer his mind to entertain a notion *so entirely the reverse* of all the facts that meet his attention in every page. The circumstance to which I before alluded, that entirely uproots this insidious objection, is, that, though Methodism is now a system, it is a system that has been formed by piece-meal: *It had no pre-conceived plan for its model, no, nor yet even for its groundwork; we have been led into our discipline by gradually following the providence of God.* It is clear, that the name "Methodist" was not chosen by the Wesleys, nor in the least thought of; it was unexpectedly given them by a young gentleman of Christ Church; and "the name being new and quaint, took immediately, and the *Methodists* were known all over the University." In the year 1730, a few of Mr. John Wesley's pupils, and one of Mr. Charles Wesley's, united with the original little band, who were also honourably called, "The Godly Club," by some of the ungodly; and in the year 1732, a few more joined them, amongst whom was the

Rev. James Hervey. These were all collegians, and lived according to rule or method. In the year 1735, the celebrated George Whitefield was added to their number. As yet, however, there was no Methodist without the limits of the University of Oxford.

4. About that time the Rev. John Wesley went to America, as a Missionary to the Indians. He was sincerely desirous of glorifying God, and of doing good to his fellow-men: But, notwithstanding his zeal, and the deep fear of God which he possessed, he did not clearly understand the great doctrine of the Bible, of the Reformation, and of the Church of England, JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH; nor did he enjoy in his heart "the forgiveness of sins." It was about the year 1738, or 1739; that is, ten years after the distinctive appellation of "Methodist" had been given; that he, having returned to England, began to preach every where, that "whosoever believeth in the name of Christ shall receive remission of sins." This doctrine was misunderstood by many, as it is to this day, and disliked by more: So that, though crowds attended on his ministry, one church after another was closed against him, till at length he was shut out of all. "Not daring," says Mr. W., "to be silent, after a short struggle between honour and conscience, I made a virtue of necessity, and preached in the middle of Moorfields." Happy necessity that constrained him to imitate the Saviour, who from a mountain, or in a wilderness, taught the people in the things of God! He continues: "Here were thousands upon thousands, abundantly more than any church could contain; numbers of whom never went to any church, or place of public worship, at all. More and more of them were cut to the heart, and came to me all in tears,

inquiring with the utmost earnestness, *What they must do to be saved?* I replied: If all of you will meet me on Thursday evening, I will advise you as well as I can. The first evening about twelve persons came; the next week, thirty or forty. When they were increased to about a hundred, I took down their names and places of abode, intending as often as it was convenient to call upon them at their own houses." Thus without any previous plan or design, began the first Methodist Society in England; which Society, Mr. Wesley denominates—"A company of people associating together, to help each other to work out their own salvation."* They were all now members of the Established Church; and it is clear that such associations of her members must tend not to weaken her influence, but to increase her strength and glory. Shall she exercise no discipline towards those of her sons who combine together in immoral practices; and only then begin to take the alarm, and cry out about irregularity, "when wicked men turn away from their wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right," by associating together for prayer and godly conversation?

5. Thus however it was, in point of fact, with the early Methodist Societies.—Religious companies of men and women, similar to the Society in London, were soon formed in Bristol, Newcastle, and various other parts of England; and also in Ireland and Scotland. Mr. Wesley's success in converting sinners to God, was a means of increasing prejudice in the minds of numbers; while there were some who rejoiced that "Christ was preached," and that he was glorified in the salvation

* Wesley's Works, vol. viii, page 398.

of souls. Scarcely one however of the clergy was willing to become his co-adjutor in the work;—a Fletcher and a Grimshaw were indeed, in part, his helpers;—and from his own principles as a clergyman he was not willing to solicit, or to receive the aid of Dissenters. Hence as converts multiplied, a want of pastors arose. But the Lord of the harvest supplied that want, by “thrusting forth labourers” of a primitive stamp in modern times:—Men who “in all things approved themselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: As deceivers and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold they lived; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” (2 Cor. vi. 4—10.) God called them to the work of the ministry, and Mr. Wesley dared not prevent their being employed in it:—“What was he, that he could withstand God?” (Acts xi. 17.) If it be inquired, how is it ascertained, that God had actually called them to the ministry?, I answer, By this simple yet sure proof—they had all those ministerial qualifications so beautifully enumerated by St. Paul in the passage just cited. Every man who is a living exemplification of that inspired description of Christian ministers, is undoubtedly “inwardly moved by the

Holy Ghost" to take the office of preaching the everlasting gospel unto the sons of men.

6. The employing of Laymen as preachers of the gospel appeared, to many, a greater irregularity than any thing that had before occurred in Methodism. It greatly increased Mr. Wesley's influence; for the ministers who laboured in connexion with him, naturally looked up to him for counsel and advice, as unto a father: But it was an *influence of God's sending, and not of his own seeking*; and throughout life, he regarded it as a talent which he was bound to employ in promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of men. Through the instrumentality of those faithful and zealous "fellow-helpers," under the guidance and direction of his judicious counsels, a mighty work of reformation was wrought in every part of the British empire; and it is now spreading itself more and more throughout the whole world; and connected, as Methodism is, with every thing that essentially belongs to the kingdom of Christ, we may venture with gratitude and praise to declare, that "of the increase of its government and peace there shall be no end."—Its rise, its progress, its past and its present history, are severally a living comment on those words of the prophet, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

II. I am next more particularly to consider the special object of the Methodist Mission to the West Indies.

1. The immediate object of our Mission to these Colonies is thus expressed, in those "standing instructions" with which every West India Missionary is furnished when appointed to his station.—"Your parti-

cular designation is to endeavour the religious instruction and conversion of the ignorant, Pagan, and neglected black and coloured population of the island, or station, to which you may be appointed, and of all others who may be willing to hear you." In obedience to these instructions we breathe good-will to "all sorts and conditions of men;" and endeavour, to the uttermost of our power, to diffuse universal happiness, by "spreading abroad in every place the knowledge of God our Redeemer." We are men of one business; our calling is to save immortal souls. The *one* object we propose, as a stimulus to zeal and unwearied exertion, is simple yet grand;—"the bringing of many sons to glory:" And the *means* by which we seek its attainment, are pure and efficacious, — *preaching and living the gospel*. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

2. But while we are the servants of you all for our Master's sake, we do indeed ingenuously acknowledge that we are *especially*, the servants of those who are slaves. Of the appellation "Negro Parsons," which has often been contemptuously given, we are not ashamed; it is an honourable badge of reproach; it is our diadem; it shall be one of the brightest gems in our future crown of glory; we do therefore distinctly avow, that, in a religious sense, we are servants to Negro slaves, for whom our Saviour died. Who so much need our sympathy, and tears, and prayers, and exertions, as they? How wretched is their moral condition without the everlasting gospel! How sad and afflicting the degradation of their minds! But little superior to the beasts that perish, the only end they seem to answer in creation is, *to prove how deeply man has fallen by sin!* We behold

them entirely ignorant of God ; or, at best, possessing but dark and confused notions of a Supreme Being. Superstitious to an excess, the devil becomes an object of worship, more than the ever-blessed God ; and tormented by the chimeras of a disordered mind, they often suffer more from imaginary evils than from afflictions that are real. Having no just ideas of God, it is impossible that their minds can be impressed with a sense of those duties that belong to their station in life: If they be obedient, it is merely owing to constraint, and not to any conviction that obedience is a duty. As to morals, it must be allowed, that they are extremely corrupt ; of which we have daily proofs in the swearing and drunkenness, the dishonesty and adultery, and other crimes that, amongst the *Pagan slaves*, universally abound. Such being their destitute moral condition, it is evident that they need instruction.

3. This is seldom denied ; but then it is frequently affirmed, that they are such poor ignorant creatures, instruction in religion will do them no good ; do what you may they will always remain the same. Speaketh the scripture then in vain, when it saith, “ Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God ? ” Are not these the sons of Ethiopia ? They are transplanted to a British soil ; but have “ they changed their skin ? ” Does not their very sable countenance forcibly remind us of the promise ? Their country’s name is found in our Bible, connected with one of the most cheering prophecies ; and I thank God, that, in the West Indies, we do behold its accomplishment. I have known many instances of the most ignorant of them being made wise to salvation ; and have seen that Christ is able to convert Africans by the same word of truth which converts

men of other countries and nations. Hence I draw the conclusion, that, when Jesus Christ commanded his disciples "to preach the gospel to *every creature*, he did not intend that Pagan Africans should be excepted. If my assertion be not deemed sufficient, would you converse with any impartial persons, unconnected with us as a body, they would bear testimony to the great good which has been done by religious instruction in the sister colonies; especially in Antigua, St. Christopher's, and Tortola.

4. If then it be admitted, that the Negroes *need* instruction; and if the Bible and numerous facts demonstrate, that *they are capable of receiving it*, it cannot long remain a doubt whether or not it ought to be given. Who has a right to withhold from them the cheering light of the gospel? Who has authority to declare, that they shall never hear of the common salvation? Will any man attempt it, unless he be influenced by a spirit similar to those of whom our Lord said?, "Woe unto you, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: Ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." (Luke xi. 52.) Every Christian, surely, will help them to find the way to the kingdom of heaven; and by all the means in his power, seek to promote their spiritual and eternal warfare. He will employ all his energies in endeavouring to "turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" nor will he ever meet them without offering up a secret prayer to God for their conversion and salvation.

5. Influenced by such sentiments, "we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of

other men's labours ; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly." (2 Cor. x. 14, 15.) Without any desire for gain, without any expectation of honours, without any prospect of ease, we have left our native land, and all that are dear to us in it, that we may spend our time in serving the outcasts of men. If you envy not our employment, respect our motives ; they are the noblest that can exist in an immortal mind. If you are suspicious of our designs, get accurate information concerning them ; but beware of those polluted sources that minister to your colonial prejudices, for they will lead you astray by partial statements of fact, and by plausible and pleasing insinuations. If you inwardly believe that we are sincere, and may be useful to the community, act a manly part, and encourage our labours ; for he is a coward, and not a man, who blushes when men scoff at him for boldly advocating a righteous and benevolent cause. In fine, we are Christians ; we come to teach Christianity : If you are Christians also, you must wish us "good luck in the name of the Lord."

That you may be assured that we teach Christianity, I now proceed to declare

III. The doctrines we believe and preach.

1. We preach the doctrine of the fall of man. "We believe in God the Father Almighty ; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things that are therein. We believe that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one Jehovah, from everlasting to everlasting:" That God created man in his own image, holy and righteous ; and that man fell from original righteousness by his own

transgression, as it is written in the scripture. As it regards Adam, the first sinner, we conceive that the fall was not merely *partial* in its effects, leaving him in possession of a less degree of holiness than he had when created; but that it was *entire*; that *all holiness* was lost in a moment, and every evil principle seated within him,—his mind, which, before was spiritual, becoming “carnal, and enmity against the God” whom once he loved with all his heart and soul! So that, whatever of penitence he may have afterwards manifested, it is to be attributed, not to some remaining latent principles of goodness, but to a measure of restoring grace, communicated to him through the Mediator of the New Covenant. As it regards his posterity, we believe that every man born into the world inherits from his parents a depraved nature; as it is written, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” And again, “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” And St. Paul, in reference to his moral condition by nature, declares: “For I know, that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth NO GOOD THING:” But “SIN dwelleth in me.” Man then is by nature utterly destitute of every thing that is good or holy; nor has he even the least inclination to it; while all the evil that exists in the world can only be traced up to one source,—the heart of man, which is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

2. We preach the doctrine of atonement for sin, by the blood-shedding of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In reference to the Redeemer, we hold, as “*the pillar and ground of the truth,*” that he is “*God over all, blessed for ever.*” We call him *Lord* and *Saviour*, because we believe him to be *God*. And we hold that he

is also truly a man; that he was “conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary;” that “he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; that he was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death.” We believe that the *death of Christ* was necessary for the salvation of the world; that his incarnation, and his spotless life, and his wonderful miracles, and his heavenly doctrines, would have been of no benefit to man, if HE had not “poured out his soul unto death, and been numbered with the transgressors.” “Without the shedding of [his] blood, there could [have been no remission;” because there could have been “no sacrifice for sins.” This doctrine is the glory of the gospel; it is our heaven on earth to make it known; “we preach Christ crucified.” As to the extent of Christ’s atonement, we believe that by that “one oblation of himself once offered, he hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for *the sins of the whole world* ;” that he “by the grace of God tasted death for every man.” On this ground it is that we can, with comfort of mind, address *every one* who kneels around the sacramental table, and say:—“The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed *for thee*, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.” As to the benefits actually received by his death, we maintain that he becomes “the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe.” A general justification from the guilt of Adam’s sin,—which St. Paul calls “justification of life,” because it is a release from the sentence of death, which, according to the tenor of the old covenant of works, lay against the original transgressor, and all his posterity,—is “come upon all men;”—it comes upon all infants, through the

grace of the Redeemer, on which account we believe, that all who die in infancy are eternally saved. From his grace proceeds that docility, simplicity, teachableness of disposition, and gentleness, that we sometimes find in children, notwithstanding their *natural propensity to sin* ; of which good qualities our Saviour spake when he said to his disciples, “Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And it is worthy of remark, that when our Saviour thus spake, he brought before his disciples *a special example in an individual child* : “Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them ; and said, *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.*” Christ seems to have selected, for an example of humility, *a child who had received converting grace*, one of those “babes and sucklings out of whose mouths God had perfected praise.”

3. We preach the doctrine of justification through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Because all men are justified in infancy from the guilt of Adam’s transgression, it does not necessarily follow that therefore they are *renewed* in infancy. A seed of grace is implanted ; but the soil of the heart is unfavourable to its life and growth. The struggle between good and evil is early felt within ; but while the mind continues “carnal,” the evil will prevail, and man will become daily guilty of innumerable transgressions. On account of his own personal and actual sins, and especially because of unbelief, he is condemned by the moral law, and by the pure and holy gospel of Christ. Nor can he be finally saved, unless he obtain present justification ; that is, the remission

of that punishment which those actual sins, the fruit of an unholy heart, have a thousand times deserved. We call justification a *present* blessing, because we believe it attainable in the present life. We cannot better express our views, than by adopting "the Apostles' Creed," as it is generally called: We believe in "the forgiveness of sins," as a blessing intimately connected with "the communion of saints," and to be obtained in "the holy catholic church;" as preparatory to the joyous "resurrection of the body," and to our inheriting "the life everlasting." Hence St. John in writing to babes in Christ, "to the the least of all saints," says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins ARE forgiven you, for his name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) But to those who are farther advanced in grace he testifies, "If we confess our sins, God *is* faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

We believe and preach, that present justification is granted "only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ—and not for our own works or deservings." "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it [faith] was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3—5.) We conceive that, in the very nature of things, it cannot possibly be otherwise; because, as stated by St. Paul, the character who is to receive justification, is, previously to that act of equitable mercy on the part of God, "ungodly:" Now while "ungodly" he can have no "works or deservings" by which he, on his part, might claim

pardon as a "debt" from the hands of the holy Lord God. We therefore maintain, that faith is the great and immediate mean of a sinner's justification. "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.) "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.) And it appears to us that justifying faith, in the act of justifying, has an especial reference to the mediation of Christ, as founded on his sacrificial death. "We are justified *by his blood*; reconciled to God *by the death* of his Son: *Have received the atonement.*" (Rom. v. 9—11.) "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith *in his blood*, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) "Repentance towards God" is indeed necessary, and goes before justifying faith, and "fruits meet for repentance" also, "a ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well," so far as there may be time and opportunity: But neither that repentance, nor those necessary fruits of it, can, according to the common acceptance of the word in our day, *merit* pardon. For though, in one sense, they are *good*, inasmuch as repentance is the gift of God, and is produced by the Holy Spirit; yet, in another sense, "we doubt not" but that those works which proceed from repentance "have in them the nature of sin," inasmuch as the heart is still "an evil heart of unbelief," and destitute of the love of God. Repentance therefore is so far from meriting pardon, that man has need to have his very repentance itself pardoned; because the streams of

“godly sorrow” become contaminated and defiled by flowing in the channel of a polluted heart. It follows then, that ungodly man can be justified by faith alone. As to the nature of justifying faith, we conceive it to be “a full persuasion that what God hath promised, he is also able to perform.” (Rom. iv. 21.) The penitent sinner hears, that God has promised to “pardon and absolve all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.” By the power of the Holy Ghost, he becomes fully persuaded of the reality of what he hears, and is enabled to testify, “Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me.” Justifying faith is man’s weakness taking hold on the power of God. “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me: And he shall make peace with me.” (Isaiah xxvii. 5.)

4. We preach the doctrine of good works. We preach them *in the only effectual way*; because we insist on the necessity of making the tree good, before the fruit can be good. Every blessing follows in the train of pardon. “If any man be *in Christ*,” by justifying faith, “he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.” (2 Cor v. 17.) “We know, it is a faithful saying, and one that we ought to affirm constantly, that *they who have believed in God*, should be careful to maintain good works.” (Titus ii. 8.) For, *when saved*, “we are called with a holy calling;” (2 Tim. i. 9;) and become “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, shewing forth the praises of God.” (1 Peter ii. 9.) After faith has been counted to us for righteousness, and we, from being ungodly, as St. Paul speaks, become, to use the expression of St. James, “the friends of God,” we know that *by works we are justified*;—that

is, continue justified, and “not by faith only.” For though works cannot justify a *sinner*, they are, with faith, the means of continuing the justification of the sons of God. “By works is their faith made perfect. We then do not make void the law through faith; but by that very means we establish the law.”

5. We believe and preach the doctrine of divine influence on the mind of man, as the only source of good. “We believe in the Holy Ghost.” We believe in *his operations*, as well as in his *existence*. We know that the Holy Ghost is God: That He is the dispenser both of gifts and grace: (1 Cor. xii. 1—13:) And that the work of Christ is not effectual to salvation without the the work of the Spirit. It is he who convinces the world of sin; who fills with righteousness, and peace, and joy; who attests to the conscience of man, that he is pardoned; who renews, and sanctifies, and guides, and strengthens, and saves. He is “the God who worketh all in all.” And as missionaries, we especially, in all our labours, endeavour to remember, that “neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God the Spirit who giveth the increase.”

6. We believe and preach the doctrine of the eternity of future rewards and punishment. We believe that there will be “a resurrection both of the just and unjust;” that Christ will be the Judge of all the earth; and that the issue of the awful transactions of the judgment-day will be, that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matt. xxv. 46.)

7. All these doctrines we steadfastly believe. “We witness both to small and great none other things” than those which the Prophets and Moses, and Christ, and the

Apostles, have declared : And these doctrines we preach, not in a laboured, oratorical, manner, “with enticing words of man’s wisdom,” but with great plainness of speech ; and so as to “commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” It is not my intention to enter into any defence of these doctrines ; I have honestly stated them, and have only to request that you will “search the scriptures daily, whether these things are so.” As to those who believe not in the scriptures, it will be no surprise to hear, that they are offended at these doctrines ; and that they think them calculated to produce the most dreadful evils in the world ; especially the doctrine of human depravity. But if they admit not that doctrine, let them never more complain, that the poor are lazy and will not work : Or that men who are their equals are always “ready to defraud one another.” Having explained our doctrines, let me next bring before you

IV. The discipline by which our Societies are governed.

1. By the term “Societies,” we mean those persons collectively considered, who have for the greater part been brought to God under our ministry ; and who, from a desire of enjoying more fully “the communion of saints,” have placed themselves under our pastoral care ; that they may have the privilege of attending those means of religious improvement which are established amongst us. Of course there is a considerable distinction to be made, between those who are members of the Society, and those who only regularly, or occasionally, worship with us in the public congregation. They who hear the word preached only, are not at all

under our rule or government, nor are we responsible for their conduct. If they walk disorderly, it is unjust to reproach us, because we have no authority over them in religious matters. But as it regards our members, who have, by uniting with us in church-fellowship, voluntarily recognized our right to “admonish them” in the Lord; we stand engaged to see that they do by their peaceable demeanour, and by the purity of their lives, adorn the gospel of God our Saviour.

2. All our institutions are purely religious: There is nothing political in any part of our economy, either as it regards ministers or people, or the rules of discipline by which we are governed. Of this every one must be convinced, who will only take the pains to look at those rules, which were first published in 1743; and which have been before the world from that year up to the present day. I cannot do better on this occasion than read an extract from them:—“There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these Societies, viz., ‘a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins.’ But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

“FIRST.—By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind;” especially that which is most generally practised. Such as

“The taking of the name of God in vain:

“The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling:

“Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors; or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity:

“ Fighting, quarrelling, {brawling ; brother going to law with brother ; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing ; the using many words in buying or selling :

“ The buying or selling uncustomed goods :

“ The giving or taking things on usury ; i. e., unlawful interest :

“ Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation ; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or ministers :

“ Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

“ Doing what we know is not for the glory of God ; as,

“ The putting on of gold, or costly apparel :

“ The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus :

“ The singing those songs, or reading those books, that do not tend to the knowledge or love of God :

“ Softness and needless self-indulgence :

“ Laying up treasure on earth :

“ Borrowing without a probability of paying ; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

“ It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,”

“ SECONDLY.—By^r doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity : Doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men :

“ To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison :

“ To their souls, by instructing, reproving, and exhorting all we have any intercourse with.

“ By doing good, especially to them who are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be: Employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business: And so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them *only*.

“ By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

“ By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily: Submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.

“ It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation:

“ **THIRDLY**,—By attending on all the ordinances of God; such are,

“ The public worship of God:

“ The ministry of the word, either read or expounded:

“ The Supper of the Lord:

“ Family and Private Prayer:

“ Searching the Scriptures; and

“ Fasting or Abstinence.

“ These are the general rules of our Societies: All which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these, we know, his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him

“ of the error of his ways: We will bear with him for
 “ a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no
 “ more place among us. We have delivered our own
 “ souls.

“ JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY.”

“ *May 1, 1743.*”

These excellent rules, I am sure, need no comment; they speak for themselves to every candid mind, and cannot fail to convince every one,—except such as are resolved not to be convinced by any evidence,—that there is nothing in Methodism, as to its discipline, that can disturb the peace of any community: Unless it be a Roman Catholic community, who might, I own, fear to find so distinct a recognition of this great Protestant principle, “The word of God is the *only* rule, and the *sufficient* rule, both of our faith and practice.”

3. The rule which goes to forbid, “The profaning of the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling;” may seem to bear on the conduct of the slave population of these colonies; and you may desire to know how far we enforce that rule in the West Indies. I will plainly tell you; though I will freely acknowledge my fears, that we yield *too much* to your prejudices in this matter. If Christ declared, that “not one jot or tittle of the law should fail,” what are we that we should wink at a *moral* evil, because it is mixed up with others that are of a political nature? Does that in any wise lessen its immoral tendency, or cause it the less to impede the progress of Christianity amongst mankind? But our practice, be it right or wrong, is just as follows: No *Free Person*, who is a member of Society, is allowed to buy or sell

any thing on the sabbath-day. With regard to them, we enforce the rule in the most rigorous manner. It is in vain for any one to plead, "Some things that we want, can only be obtained on the sabbath;" our invariable reply is, "Then you must do without them; it is better to sit down to a dinner of herbs, than procure more agreeable food by purchasing it on the day of the Lord."—A *Slave*, however, who is united to our Society, is allowed, both to cultivate his grounds, and to traffic on the sabbath-day: We never tell them, that such a practice is right, nor do we peremptorily require them to abstain from it; leaving this matter to their masters and their own consciences. Were we to enjoin them, not to labour for themselves, as the sabbath is considered their own day; we do not see how they could avoid, except in a few instances, pilfering their master's property, to support their own existence, or the existence of their families. The attempt positively to remedy one moral evil, seems to force them upon another. In such a choice of difficulties, conceiving that the fourth commandment is specially directed to those who hold "men-servants and maid-servants;" we conclude, that if established customs necessitate the servants to labour, they, not being in their own power, may be graciously forgiven; while the accumulated guilt must lie upon those who require it at their hands.

4. In those excellent instructions, with which all the Wesleyan Missionaries are furnished, there are some special rules added for the government of our Societies in the West Indies, adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the slave population, which are not met by the general rules already quoted. An extract from those instructions will further elucidate our system of disci-

pline in these colonies. The Committee who manage our missions, thus charge us :—“ Those of you who are appointed to the West Indies, being placed in stations of considerable delicacy, and which require, from the state of Society there, a peculiar circumspection and prudence on the one hand, and of zeal, diligence, and patient perseverance, on the other, you are required to attend to the following directions, as specially applicable to your mission there :

“ Where Societies are already formed, you are required to watch over them with the fidelity of those who must give up their account to Him who hath purchased them with his blood, and in whose providence they are placed under your care. Your labours must be constantly directed to improve them in the knowledge of Christianity, and to enforce upon them the experience and practice of its doctrines and duties, without intermingling doubtful controversies in your administrations, being mainly anxious, that those over whom you have pastoral care, should clearly understand the principal doctrines of the scriptures, feel their renovating influence upon their hearts, and become ‘holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.’ And in order to this, we recommend that your sermons should consist chiefly of clear expositions of the most important truths of holy writ, enforced with affection and fervour on the consciences and conduct of them that hear you ; that you frequently and familiarly explain portions of the scriptures ; and that, as extensively as you possibly can, you introduce the method of teaching children, and the less instructed of the adult slaves and others, by the excellent catechisms with which you are furnished.

“ Before you receive any person into Society, you

shall be satisfied of his desire to become acquainted with the religion of Christ, and to obey it; and if he has not previously been under Christian instruction, nor baptized, you are, before his admission as a member, diligently to teach him the Christian Faith, and the obligations which he takes upon himself by baptism; so as to be assured of his having obtained such knowledge of the principles of religion, and such belief of them, as to warrant you to administer to him that ordinance. Beside this, no person is to be admitted into Society, without being placed first on trial, for such time as shall be sufficient to prove whether his conduct has been reformed, and that he has wholly renounced all those vices to which he may have been before addicted.

“It is enforced upon you, that you continue no person a member of your Societies, whose conversation is not as becometh the gospel of Christ. That any member of Society who may relapse into his former habits, and become a polygamist, an adulterer, or an unclean person; who shall be idle and disorderly; disobedient to his owner; (if a slave;) who shall steal, or be in any other way immoral or irreligious; shall be put away, after due admonition, and proper attempts to reclaim him from the error of his way.

“You are to consider the children of the Negroes and coloured people of your Societies and congregations, as a part of your charge; and it is recommended to you, wherever it is practicable and prudent, to establish Sunday or other schools for their instruction. It is to be considered by you as a very important part of your duty as a Missionary, to catechise them as often as you conveniently can, at stated periods; and to give your utmost

aid to their being brought up in Christian knowledge, and in industrious and moral habits.

“ As in the colonies in which you are called to labour, a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, the committee most strongly call to your recollection, what was so fully stated to you, when you were accepted as a Missionary to the West Indies, that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition. On all persons in the state of slaves, you are diligently and explicitly to enforce the same exhortations which the apostles of our Lord administered to the slaves of ancient nations, when by their ministry they embraced Christianity: ‘ Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.’ (Ephes. vi. 5—8.) ‘ Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh: Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men: Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons.’ (Col. iii. 22—25.)

“ You are directed to avail yourselves of every opportunity to extend your labours among the slaves of the islands where you may be stationed; but you are in no case to visit the slaves of any plantation without the permission of the owner or manager; nor are the times which you may appoint for their religious services to interfere with their owners' employ; nor are you to suffer any protracted meeting in the evening, nor even at Negro burials, on any account whatever. In all these cases you are to meet even unreasonable prejudices, and attempt to disarm suspicions, however groundless, so far as you can do it consistently with your duties as faithful and laborious ministers of the gospel.

“ As many of the Negroes live in a state of polygamy, or in a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, your particular exertions are to be directed to the discountenance and correcting of these vices, by pointing out their evil, both in public and in private, and by maintaining the strictest discipline in the Societies. No man, living in a state of polygamy, is to be admitted a member, or even on trial, who will not consent to live with one woman as his wife, to whom you shall join him in matrimony, or ascertain that this rite has been performed by some other minister; and the same rule is to be applied, in the same manner, to a woman proposing to become a member of Society. No female, living in a state of concubinage with any person, is to be admitted into Society so long as she continues in that sin.

“ The committee caution you against engaging in any of the civil disputes or local politics of the colony to which you may be appointed, either verbally, or by correspondence with any person at home, or in the colonies. The whole period of your temporary resi-

dence in the West Indies, is to be filled up with the proper work of your mission. You are not to become parties in any civil quarrel; but are to please all men for their good to edification; intent upon the solemn work of your office, and upon that eternal state, in the view of which, the committee trust, you will ever think and act."

5. After such large citations from our standing rules, only one thing more is necessary to give you all the information that can be desired, concerning our discipline; namely, a brief account of the officers that exist in the Society, and of the nature of those religious meetings which are held for the spiritual benefit of the members.

Our church-officers are few. First, there are those who officiate as ministers of the gospel. Of these there are two classes; generally denominated in our connexion, the *Itinerant* and the *Local Preachers*. "The *Itinerant Ministers*" are those who are wholly set apart to the work of the ministry: All the *Missionaries* are of this class, that they may be "at the remotest distance from all temptations to a secular, or mercenary temper; and devote all their time and energies to the sacred duties of their mission." We are called *Itinerant Ministers*, because we are not settled and fixed pastors over one distinct congregation; but we *itinerate* or travel to minister to different congregations, within the limits of the circuit or island where we dwell; and because it is a part of our system, every two or three years, to remove to a new station. "The *Local Preachers*" are an eminently useful body of men, subordinate to those who *itinerate*, and employed under their direction. The *local ministers* are lay-men of piety and talents, who follow their worldly calling throughout the week; and

on the sabbath-day, without any temporal reward, preach the gospel in the towns and villages of their own neighbourhood. But this class of ministers, owing to peculiar circumstances, does not generally exist in the West Indies.

Next in office to ministers, are the *Leaders*. Every Society is divided into little companies called "classes;" there are generally from twelve to twenty persons in each class, over whom a judicious person is appointed as leader. It is his duty to watch over the souls committed to his care with affection and fidelity; and if any member of his class walks disorderly and will not be reprov'd, to make the minister acquainted with it, who, in union with the rest of the leaders, has authority to exclude such an one from the Society. Owing to this arrangement, it is not possible for any moral evil to be long practised by any member, without its being brought to light; so that we have the means in our own hands of continuing "a holy people," by putting away all that "hate reproof," and that will not "amend their lives according to God's holy word."

The next order of men amongst us, is that of *Stewards* and *Trustees*: These are *temporal officers* of the Society. The stewards receive all monies that are contributed to support the ministry, and from them pay to each minister his income. No minister in the connexion can hold the office of steward, or any other temporal office in the Society: He is entirely cut off from the possibility of making "gain of godliness." The trustees are men who hold the chapels in trust, for the use of the preachers appointed from year to year by the Conference. We have no other officers than those of *Ministers*, *Leaders*, *Stewards*, and *Trustees*, known amongst us.

As to our religious meetings, one of the chief is the weekly class-meeting. At an hour that may be most convenient, each leader meets his members. The devotion of that hour begins with singing and prayer; the leader, next, in a few words, relates his own religious experience; that is, he tells a company of people desirous of being Christians, of his *religious* joys or sorrows; in the same manner that a worldly man would talk with his acquaintance about his worldly prosperity or troubles. The leader then questions each individual in order, as to the present state of his heart and life; and gives to each instruction, or comfort, as may be required: A verse of a hymn and prayer conclude the service. But before they part, each member contributes something towards the support of the gospel; but they seldom give as much for God's cause, as, before they knew his ways, they spent in foolish vanities. The original rule of Methodism is, that each member shall contribute, upon an average, one penny per week: If any be very poor, those who are richer, shall supply their deficiency.

Once a quarter we have also our love-feasts, which are very similar to class-meetings; only the whole of the Society meet together; and any one of them who chooses, is at liberty, without being questioned, to give a brief narrative of his conversion to God, and of his present religious experience. This mean of grace is exceedingly edifying; it constrains us to "magnify the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." We generally eat bread and drink water together, as did the primitive Christians, to remind us that we are all of one family: And a collection is made, which is afterwards distributed to the poor and needy.

Society-meetings are occasionally held, after the close of a public service, when the minister has an opportunity of pointing out any minute evil, that he could not conveniently mention in a public discourse; or of giving such instructions and exhortations as he may judge necessary to promote Christianity more fully in the hearts and lives of the members.

Prayer-meetings are meetings in which the time is employed solely in the delightful exercises of alternately singing the high praises of God, and of calling upon his holy name.

Watch-nights are seldom held in the West Indies. A Watch-night is simply a continued evening service,—a few of our local brethren giving a word of exhortation to the people, after the itinerant minister has delivered a discourse unto them.

As to our Sacramental services, they are precisely the same as those of the Church of England: We use the same form of words; and we give the elements in the same manner, the communicants devoutly kneeling round the altar.

Having thus given you full information as to “our disciples and our doctrine,” I now proceed to the fifth particular,

V. The manner in which the Missionaries are prepared for their work.

1. The Methodists have no academy in which young men are trained up for the ministry. It might perhaps have been more politic to have withheld this statement; but a Christian man has nothing to do with the wise policy of the world: We wish you to know *entire Methodism*, therefore we declare to you things as they are.

We have indeed two public schools, one at Kingswood, and the other at Woodhouse Grove, in which the sons of itinerant ministers are educated : And if any of those youths possess piety and talents, and are called of God to the ministry, the advantages they have enjoyed in those schools, are greater than they meet with in ordinary life. But though a few of those young men have been called out into the itinerant work at home, I have never yet known one of them to become a Missionary to the Negroes.

2. Do we then despise human learning? By no means. We neither despise it, nor are we destitute of it. Much prayer to God, and hard study of the scriptures, and of works that are calculated to “pay a contribution to the scriptures,” serve instead of a college to Methodist preachers. We have men in our Connexion, who, for learning and science, have scarcely their equals in the British empire: Now it matters little *how* a man gets wisdom, provided he does get it, and consecrate it all to the service and glory of the Redeemer. And as to the great body of ministers at home, and of missionaries abroad; for good sound sense, for a right understanding of the scriptures, and an ability to “speak as the oracles of God,” they are not inferior to ministers of any denomination, whether of the Church of England, (which is “the mother of us all,”) or amongst the various classes of Dissenters that have branched out from her. We have no *made* orators; but we have men naturally eloquent, whose “doctrine drops as the rain, and whose speech distils as the dew:” We have no logicians trained in the vowels of syllogisms, but I trust every man amongst us can “speak forth the words of truth and soberness.” As Missionaries to the Negroes, we come to explain the truths

of the English Bible; and for that work we are adequately and naturally prepared by our system of discipline. *For it is a remarkable fact, that though when our Societies were originally formed, there was not the most distant conception that a Methodist ministry would ever exist; yet the very constitution of those Societies is now found to be exactly adapted to the forming and preparing of such a ministry; and for the calling into exercise every talent which any man may have received.* “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” And while our discipline remains, academies will be *unnecessary for us*; nor do I think, that, as a body, we could more miss our way, than by attempting to mend what is most evidently the plan of God.

3. Every Missionary is required to give evidence that he is a Christian, before he is sent to teach Christianity. If he desire the work before his conversion to God, he is not accepted; he “must tarry at Jerusalem, until he be endued with power from on high.” Having been some time a private member of Society, and having received into his heart the salvation of the gospel, and exemplified its purity in his life; and having been useful as a private member, in visiting the sick, teaching in Sunday-schools, or any other Christian charity; if he desire to be useful in a more public way, and think that he is “moved by the Holy Ghost” to preach the gospel, he counsels with some judicious friend, perhaps his leader, and with the itinerant ministers of the circuit. Without their consent, he cannot take a single step in the work. If after examination he be approved, he is recommended at the next Quarterly Meeting of the local preachers, at which the eldest itinerant minister presides, to be received amongst their body *on trial*. After being three

months on trial, at the following meeting he is called before his local brethren, and the itinerant ministers, and examined in their presence. A report of his labours during the three months of probation is made, and how far his ministry was acceptable and profitable to the people. If, after every necessary enquiry has been instituted, the majority consent, his probation ends, and he is fully recognized as a local preacher of the circuit in which he resides. Perhaps he spends the remaining part of his honourable and useful life, without giving himself up more fully to the service of the sanctuary. If however he consider himself called to the itinerant work, he must first be proposed by one of the itinerant ministers, at a meeting of the local preachers, leaders, and stewards, of the circuit where he has resided, *for their recommendation*: Without obtaining their written recommendation, he can never be taken out more fully into the ministry. To all these persons he is well-known; their eye has been upon his conduct, perhaps from the day he entered the Society; or at least, from the time of his becoming a public character. If approved by them, he is examined at a District Meeting; that is, a meeting of itinerant ministers, from twenty to thirty in number, whose circuits are contiguous to each other. That examination before that assembly of ministers, in which one of the eldest presides, relates to his piety, his talents, his moral conduct, his freedom from debt, his religious principles, his motives, his reading and studies while a local preacher, and his willingness to devote his whole life unreservedly to the great work of saving souls. If every enquiry be satisfactorily answered, the recommendation of his circuit is accepted and recorded; and that recommendation is, through the Dis-

trict Meeting, conveyed to the Conference. The Conference consists of the hundred oldest itinerant ministers in the Connexion. It assembles annually in London or Bristol, or in one or other of the large towns of England. From their number one is selected to fill the office of president, which office he holds during their sitting, which continues about a fortnight; and also throughout the rest of the year. This is the highest office in the Methodist Connexion; but there are no emoluments arising from it: Nor indeed from any one office that is held throughout the whole body. With the Conference, many other itinerant ministers meet also; the general number annually assembled is from three to four hundred. Here all the the great affairs of the whole body are settled in a regular and orderly manner. And here it is that every man, designed for the itinerant work, after having undergone the examinations already mentioned, is finally proposed; and, if approved, he is received *on trial for four years*. If, at the expiration of those four years,—during each of which he is examined as to his conduct, and in particular as to his “attendance to reading” and the improvement of his gifts,—he be found to have lived “holily and unblameably,” and to have given evidence that he is “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed;” he is, after a final public examination before the whole Conference, received and acknowledged as an itinerant minister in the Wesleyan Connexion. If the final examination be not satisfactory, he is continued on trial or dismissed, as may judged most expedient; the Conference always acting towards him with as much tenderness as the case will allow. When a man is fully received into the body, however long he may continue in it, his name is

called over, and an enquiry instituted as to his conduct during the past year, at every succeeding Conference : From this enquiry no man is exempted.

If, when a young man is proposed to itinerate, he prefer the foreign work, and desire to have his name enrolled amongst the number of Missionaries ; he is recommended in the manner already stated, and committed to the direction of the Missionary Committee. He is set apart as a Missionary, by the laying on of hands, and exhortation, and prayer. He is also duly licensed, if he be going to a *Christian government* ; for there it is necessary to “*tolerate*” *Christianity*.

Such then is the manner in which we are prepared for our work ; and while engaged in it, the same examinations are observed in our annual District Meetings, as would have been attended to, had we remained at home ; and a regular report is made to the Managing Committee in London, and through them to the Conference at its next assembling.

Let me now explain

VI. The means by which we are supported.

1. The whole of our Mission concerns are managed by a committee, consisting of the president and secretary of the Conference, for the time being ; and forty-eight other members :—They are annually appointed by the Conference, and act in the name, and on the behalf of the Conference throughout each successive year. One half of those forty-eight members are itinerant ministers ; and the other half lay-men. It is required that thirty-two of the number, sixteen ministers and sixteen lay-gentlemen, be resident in or near London : Four of the latter go out every year by rotation. On the London

part of the committee devolve the active concerns of the Missionary department, which require large sacrifices of time, and much prayerful care and attention. Three of the ministers are annually appointed by the Conference as secretaries to the institution. By the funds, at the disposal of this committee, and under their subordinate direction, the Missionaries are, in the first instance, sent out to their stations.

2. At almost every Mission Station, we have a Society or Societies formed. Their weekly contribution in the classes, as before stated, as well as their quarterly contributions, when the minister meets all the classes in order, go far towards the support of the ministry, where the Societies are large, as in Antigua, and some other islands; but where the Society is small, the deficiency is very considerable. To promote the same end, we also make a public collection once a month in all our chapels. What deficiency may afterwards remain, is supplied from the funds of the Mission in England. Those funds are raised and replenished in this manner: In almost every town and village where Methodism is known, a Methodist Auxiliary Missionary Society is organized and established. Pious individuals become collectors of weekly sums, which their friends and acquaintance may subscribe; and at the anniversary of the formation of the Society, those sums are brought together, and remitted to the Parent Institution. And on the Sabbath preceding, Missionary sermons are preached, and public collections made. Occasional liberal donations are given; and sometimes legacies bequeathed to the Institution. We also establish Missionary Societies on *Mission stations*; and thus return a part of the bounty we receive from British benevolence at home. Nor have the in-

stances of late been few, in which West India proprietors have subscribed annually, or given sums to a considerable amount, in furtherance of that work in which we are engaged. These are the resources of the Society; and from them the ordinary deficiencies, and the various incidental expenses of the Missions are supplied.

3. Let it not, however, be supposed, that, from resources so abundant, and that will never fail, the Missionaries are enriching themselves. Forty years has the Mission to the West Indies been established, and there has not been an instance of a Missionary becoming wealthy, by his labours in this work. It forms no part of his intention, it is not even a secondary motive with him, to gain wealth, when he first enters on the Mission. I believe no Missionary has ever put the question beforehand, "What shall I receive for my labour?" He takes it for granted, from the economy of Methodism at home, that he will, when abroad, have "food and raiment," and with that he is satisfied. It forms no part of the arrangement of the committee, in preparing a man for his station, to enter into any temporal engagement or stipulations with him: And were he to evince anxiety of mind on that subject, it would be at once regarded as a full proof, whatever his other qualifications might be, that he had not the great Missionary pre-requisite,—a deadness to this present evil world. While abroad in the work, each Missionary receives a moderate allowance, which is barely sufficient for his comfortable maintenance; every man receives his Omer, whether the Societies on his station raise little or much: "He that gathereth much, hath nothing over; and he that gathereth little, hath no lack." A minute account of all the temporal concerns of each station is, every

year, required by the committee in London; and the whole is narrowly inspected by a branch of it, called "the Committee of Finance." And all the sums that are raised, and entrusted to the care of the Managing Committee, are annually printed in the Report, as well as the whole of the Missionary expenditure; so that every Auxiliary and Branch Society can judge, for itself, of the fidelity with which the whole of these growing concerns are managed. When a Missionary returns home, it is expected that the Society amongst whom he has laboured will meet his expences as far as they are able; the Parent Institution supplies the rest. This is a correct statement of the means by which we are supported in our blessed toil. The Lord be praised! No man can become rich by being a Methodist Missionary! The Lord grant that that day may never arrive, when any worldly allurements shall be held out, to drag men out into a work, upon which the love of Christ and of souls constrains them not to enter! But while we ourselves are poor, through the gracious blessing of our God we have been the means of making "many rich."

VII. The success which has attended Missionary labours.

1. Religious knowledge has been increased. Half a century ago, how awfully descriptive of the mass of the population in the West Indies were the words of Isaiah, "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people:." But we joy to add, "the Lord hath arisen upon them, and upon them is his glory seen." "The people which sat in darkness have seen a great light; and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of

death, light is sprung up." Light has arisen in Chaos itself; it hath "shined out of darkness;" it is reducing all things to order and beauty; and, in time, the contending gloom shall disappear before the lustre of its glory. Sunday Schools are established in almost every West India town: And thousands of children are taught to read the word of God. A few years more, and every child within our sovereign's Western Dominions, we trust, will be "able to read the Bible." Catechetical instruction is becoming extensively useful, to the mass of the adult population, as well as to the rising generation. The word of God sounds from island to island: And tens of thousands have heard of a Redeemer in the land of their captivity, and have called the day happy, that ever they became British slaves! The knowledge communicated by these means is of the best kind.—It is *safe* knowledge; it endangers not the peace of communities. That man is a reproach to the religion he professes, who, calling himself "a Christian," yet conceives that the knowledge of Christianity would be injurious to society.—It is *cheering* knowledge.

Soft peace it brings wherever it arrives,
 It builds our quiet, as it forms our lives;
 Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
 And opens in the breast a little heaven.

It is *improving* knowledge; it does good to all classes of men; it makes a kinder master, and a more obedient slave!

2. Morality has been promoted. Look at the conduct of religious slaves on the Sabbath-day, imperfectly as they are able to observe it, and you will see

how the "little leaven is leavening the whole lump." Unable to attend the house of God every Sabbath, on their labouring Sunday, and other occasional hours, they are quickened to industry, by the hope of being able on the following Sabbath to worship in the sanctuary. In the midst of the market and bustle of the town, what a sight is it to behold crowds who have been serving God, in cleanly garments, returning from the sacred place that has been to them as the gate of heaven! None of them are seen drunken in the street; none of them engage in petty broils and quarrels with their fellow slaves; but in a peaceful and orderly manner they retire to their estate, or their habitation. A principle of honesty is implanted in their hearts on the day of the Lord, that operates throughout the week; and in the midst of temptation, whether arising from poverty, or want, or covetousness, the slave remembers that he has heard, "Let him that stole, steal no more: But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Marriage, with the sacred blessings that follow in its train, has been introduced; and thus Christianity has *created a new order of relations* that before had no existence in society. The operation of its benefits may be slow, but they are progressive. And they spread "from the least to the greatest." Marriage, that has been so strenuously insisted on, in regard to the once *Pagan*, but now *Christian* slaves, is becoming much more frequent among those to whom they belong, or by whom they are governed. And it certainly is a remarkable fact, that in those colonies where the Missions have most flourished, the general standard of morals is most raised amongst the high and influential classes of society;

while in those islands where Missions have languished, there has been a retrogradation of morals, and a sinking more deeply into vice of every kind.—Missions then are a general blessing. They come in continual contact with moral evils; and though the struggle may sometimes be obstinate and desperate; yet in the end those evils give way, and a voice is heard proclaiming, “Behold! I make all things new!”

3. Souls have been saved. “After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” (Rev. vii. 9, 10.) O what a joyous thought, that many an African Negro is found amongst that multitude! Judging from what I have beheld in other colonies, I am fully persuaded that many hundreds of them have already gone to glory. Yea, and I have seen a Christian slave die happy in Barbadoes! And I know a few that are now living happy in the enjoyment of the Divine favour, and who are preparing for “the inheritance of the saints in light.” The day of eternity only will unfold the extent of those benefits, which, directly and indirectly, have been wrought by the efforts of Missionaries in these islands. The good that has been accomplished, we trust, is the prelude of a much mightier and more general moral change; giving us to see, that, whatever may be the civil condition of mankind, in the church of God “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but that Christ is all in all.”

4. "By whose labours have all these boasted good effects been produced?"—"Boasting is excluded:" *It is God's work from first to last.* "Not unto us, Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake." But the instruments employed, and owned of God, have been chiefly of two classes: FIRST. The Moravian brethren, "whose praise is in all the churches:" Their ministry of the word has been very greatly and extensively blessed to the salvation of many souls. God grant that the glory may never depart from them!—NEXT to them, God has made the Methodist Missionaries of general utility in the colonies. Doubtless "we are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised." We are poor, ignorant, illiterate, unlearned men. But look at the result of the labours of these illiterates! Look at their flourishing Societies! Look at their congregations! Look at the multitudes they have been the means of "turning from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God!" And seeing that you are far superior to them in wisdom, let reason teach you, that the more weak and insignificant the employed agents appear, the stronger is the argument that ought to force from every beholder the admiring exclamation, "What hath GOD wrought!"—"We have been throughly manifest among you in all things." (2 Cor. xi. 6.) "We will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even to you." (2 Cor. x. 13.)

5. While we are able to adduce innumerable instances of real, solid, and lasting good that has resulted from

our labours, who is able to bring forward any proof of evil that has resulted from them? A thousand times we have heard it affirmed, that Methodism is a dangerous system; but where are the facts that establish the point? We boldly aver, that, in the whole history of the West India Mission, *not one single fact* can be produced to prove it! As to those therefore who are alarmed at the spread of Methodism, how descriptive are the words of the Psalmist, "There were they in great fear, where no fear was!" (Psalm liii. 5.) As to those who oppose it, let them consider that "if this counsel or this work had been of men, it would have come to nought" before this period; "but since it is of God, they cannot overthrow it;" and that, while they attempt it, they are clearly "fighting against God." As to all those who are really candid inquirers into the truth of things, we trust the impartial statement that has been given of every part of our system will prove satisfactory; and cause them to say AMEN to the prayer with which this discourse shall close:—"Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

SERMON IX.

ON HAVING THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—

ROM. viii. 9.

A CHRISTIAN is one who follows Christ, and whom Christ approves. The name was originally given to those who were previously known by the appellation of “disciples,” or scholars. Their conformity to Christ could not be hidden from the world; men “took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.” Of him they had “learned to be meek and lowly in heart;” for meekness and lowliness are the distinguishing excellencies of the Christian character.

Christianity is the same in every succeeding age. It is a “pure and undefiled religion;” “pure” in its origin, and, in its progress, “undefiled” by the corruptions of the world. Man indeed has “sought out many inventions,” and many superstitious rites and ceremonies have been mixed up with its outward profession; but those human additions are not Christianity, nor do they in reality change its nature. It still continues an unalterable truth, that the “kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” “The kingdom of God is within you.” None but those who bear the image of the Saviour, who copy his example, and who live under the influence of the

Holy Ghost, are recognized by Christ as belonging to him. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

We shall endeavour to explain

I. What is meant by that phrase, "the Spirit of Christ;" and what by "having" that Spirit.

II. Adduce the evidences by which it may be known to the world that we possess it: And

III. Shew the awful condition of those who are destitute of it.

I. 1. The context will help us to explain the meaning of this phrase, "the Spirit of Christ."—"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that *the Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now if any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his." The same Person who in this latter sentence is called the Spirit of Christ, is, in the former, denominated, "the Spirit of God;" in both places we are to understand the expression as referring to God the Holy Ghost. This is so exceedingly clear, from the frequent mention of his influences throughout the chapter, as to need no further proof.

That divine and eternal Spirit is called "the Spirit of Christ," because he is given unto the sons of men by virtue of the Redeemer's death, and resurrection, and exaltation at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Christ especially promised that gift to his disciples, in his last discourse with them before his death; and he made known to them, that the Spirit should be sent from *the Father*, through his own intercession on their behalf: "I will *pray the Father*, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth." And again, "The Comforter,

the Holy Ghost, whom *the Father will send* in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 16, 17, 26.) On the day of Pentecost, Peter was enabled to testify, that these promises had been fulfilled: "Therefore Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, and *having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost*, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.)

It is the special office of the Holy Ghost, to glorify Christ in the world. It was he who inspired the prophets, "who prophesied of the grace that should come unto us" through the Redeemer; so that they employed themselves in "searching what, or what manner of time, *the Spirit of Christ which was in them* did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Peter i. 10, 11.) And now, when he accompanies the preaching of the everlasting gospel with power to the heart, "he convinces men of sin, because they believe not in Christ;" (John xvi. 9;) and when the convinced sinner believes with the heart unto righteousness, it is through the power of the Spirit, by whom he calls Jesus LORD. "God then sends forth *the Spirit of his Son* into his heart, crying, *Abba, Father!*" (Gal. iv. 6.) "Of him," says the apostle, that is, of God the Father who is the fountain of all goodness, are ye "in Christ Jesus, who of God [the Spirit] is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In this manner is the word of promise accomplished: "He shall glorify *me*; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath, are mine: Therefore

said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you." (John xvi. 14, 15.)

For these reasons is the Spirit of God called, in the scripture now before us, *the Spirit of Christ*.

2. What are we to understand by "having that Spirit?" The context will enable us to answer this inquiry in a clear and satisfactory manner. "But ye," says the apostle, "are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," that is, if he have not that Spirit *dwelling in him*, "he is none of his." Now he only dwells in the heart of obedient believers. He strives with all men; but he manifests the Father in the Son, unto those that love Christ and keep his commandments, "in a manner that he does not unto the world." "They are the temples of the living God: as God hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" (2 Cor. vi. 16.) To have the Spirit of Christ, therefore, is *to receive him as he is promised in the gospel unto all believers*.

He dwells in them as the Spirit of Faith. "Ye are all the children of God," says St. Paul, "by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) But "Faith is the gift of God;" faith is bestowed when the Holy Ghost is given. "After that the Holy Ghost is come upon" a penitent sinner, who has been "waiting for the promise of the Father," he "receives power" to "take hold of the strength" of the Redeemer, and thereby to "make peace with him." He is then "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise:" And if he "grieve not the Spirit of God," he is enabled from that day forwards to testify, "I live, yet not I, but Christ," by the indwelling of the Holy

Ghost, "liveth in me: And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) As it is written again: "The just," or justified, "shall live by faith." Thus the Holy Spirit dwells in every christian's heart, enabling him to exercise that faith by which he continues in that state of grace, or favour with God, into which he was first introduced, when God was "merciful to his unrighteousness, and remembered his iniquities no more." His holy influence keeps faith alive, by frequent application of the divine promises to the soul; and by daily manifestations of God to the heart. And especially in the hour of trial and temptation, he "suffers not faith to fail;" but, in a wonderful manner, strengthens that grace in the christian, that it may be "found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

The Holy Ghost dwells in all believers as the Spirit of adoption. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father!* The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 15, 16.) Here the apostle speaks of the *witness* of the Spirit as *inseparable from adoption*; so that, without that witness, the filial relation can have no existence. In like manner we hear the apostle testifying in a parallel passage:—"Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father!*" (Gal. iv. 6.) What the witness of the Spirit is, it is no difficult matter to understand, if the mind be at all enlightened in the things of God. The word "witness" has no new, mysterious, extraordinary meaning attached to it; only God the Spirit is the witness to the Spirit of man. Of course, in the very nature of things, it must be a *direct* witness: And there

would have been no need of the emphatic explanatory term, if imperfect christians, who have not yet had their day of Pentecost, had not attempted to explain away the vitality of the doctrine, by putting *a new and forced sense upon the phrase that is used to describe it*. What is it to “bear witness?” Is it to reason upon a case, and to draw certain conclusions from admitted premises? By no means:—That is *inference*, but it is *no witness at all*. To “bear witness,” is to testify a known fact, with the intent of removing any doubt or uncertainty about it. Now the witness of God’s Spirit, is God himself testifying, to the spirit of a believer, this fact, that he is a child of God. Even the witness of our own conscience, from the very circumstance of its being *a witness*, is direct and immediate; and not the result of comparison and argument. This is so manifestly the case, that when St. Paul is only speaking of the Heathen, he says, “Their conscience also bears them witness; their thoughts the *mean while* accusing or else excusing one another:” That is, *in the very act* of transgression or of obedience to their law, conscience bears its testimony for or against them, in the thoughts of their mind. So also the christian,—who is enabled to declare, “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world,”—does not obtain that testimony by deduction; *it is a natural attendant on his actions as they flow, a momentary consciousness that all his words and works are acceptable to God*. And so the witness of the Spirit is a testimony from the Holy Spirit, to the spirit of every one who walks with God, that he pleases him. The witness of our own conscience accompanies that of the Spirit, agreeably to the words of St. Paul, “My con-

science also bearing me witness in the *Holy Ghost* :” (Rom. ix. i:) And to the expression of St. Peter: “The *answer* of a good conscience toward God:” (1 Peter iii. 21.) “The answer”—as echo answers to the voice.

Universal experience shows, that the witness of our conscience must be subordinate to, and dependent on the witness of the Spirit. For of those who deny his witness, and seek to come at a knowledge of their being the children of God solely by inferring that they are such, none can be found, who are, *by that means alone*, assured of their sonship. After all their pains, it is to them a doubtful matter: And they are full of uncertainty and fears, all their life through, as a just punishment for their unbelief. “If ye will not believe, how can ye be established?” If ever they have gleams of light, and gracious visitations, when the consolations of God are not small; is it not when the Holy Spirit compassionates their weakness, and, notwithstanding those prejudices which so peculiarly dishonour him, does testify to their hearts, that “now are they the sons of God?” In fine, if “a man can receive *nothing*, except it be given him from heaven;” much less can he receive so great a blessing as a knowledge of adoption, unless it come from God. What earthly father is there that refuses to own his child? And shall not our heavenly Father own us as his sons? “If *ye* then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit,” to witness that filial relation, “to them that ask him?” (Luke [xi. 13.]) *It is by this means that he becomes “the Comforter.”* This is “the common salvation” of all that believe.

He dwells in believers as the Spirit of holiness. His constant admonition to the sons of God, is: “Be ye

therefore imitators of God as dear children." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." Hence "they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "Through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body; and being the sons of God, they are led by the Spirit of God." He who has sealed pardon on the heart, and regenerated the soul, continues "to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, making them perfect in every good work." He sanctifies them more and more. Their "souls are purified in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren." The "incorruptible seed of the word of God, lives and abides for ever" in those "honest and good hearts which bring forth fruit with patience." (1 Peter i. 22, 23; Luke viii. 15.) It is true, holiness exists in christian believers in different degrees; because after they have been "saved by grace," very much depends on their own faithfulness. "To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." But all in whom the Spirit of Christ abides, as the Comforter, are saved from the power and love of sin; they are enabled to overcome it, and they daily "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of their Saviour." Their "faith groweth exceedingly," till their "love is made perfect," and till they so "abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost," as to be enabled to "give thanks unto the Father, who *hath made them meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

Thus we see that the phrase in the text, to "have the Spirit of Christ," signifies, to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart, as the Spirit of Faith, the Spirit of Adoption, and the Spirit of Holiness. We propose,
SECONDLY,

II. To adduce the evidences by which it may be known to the world, that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us. These evidences are three,—holy tempers, holy words, and holy actions.

1. **HOLY TEMPERS.** “The fruit of the Spirit,” says St. Paul, “is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: Against such there is no law.” (Gal. v. 22, 23.) Of these several fruits of the Spirit, which are found in every Christian believer, we shall briefly speak, that you may perceive more fully the real excellency of the Christian character.

“The fruit of the Spirit is LOVE.” This the apostle justly places first, as it is the chief of all Christian graces. It is the perfection of all the rest; yea, in love they are all included. He who has the Spirit of Christ, feels “the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him.” “Being justified freely by grace,” and made a partaker of “salvation by the remission of sins,” he cannot forbear crying out with an apostle, “Herein is LOVE, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “We love him, because he first loved us.” And whosoever hath the love of God, loves his neighbour also. He loves not only his kindred and friends, but all mankind, not excepting his enemies; and he is willing to “do good to all men, but especially to them who are of the household of faith.” O excellent principle of charity! It is the most humbling of all graces. Nothing so much abases the soul as the love of God. Yet nothing so much exalts it; for hereby we are made “partakers of the divine nature.” “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

Where love is, there must be happiness. Hence the second fruit of the Spirit is Joy,—Joy that is of divine origin, and therefore called “joy in the Holy Ghost.” Every one “joys in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” when he has “received the atonement,”—the inestimable benefits of the Saviour’s passion. This joy does not arise from any thing outward, such as worldly comfort, prosperity, and honour; nor is it dependent on any outward circumstances for its continuance: But it springs from a clear sense of the divine favour in the heart; from the blessed assurance of being a child of God, and an heir of God through Christ Jesus. It is sometimes so abundant, that the believer can “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:” Nor is it in the power of “manifold temptations” to destroy it; for even then, in the midst of them, and while he feels their oppression, he is enabled to “count it all joy, that he has fallen into those divers temptations, knowing,” from the present support that is given, that “the trying of his faith worketh patience.” If he be faithful, he shall never lose his joy; but it “shall be full;” it “shall remain, and none shall take it from him.” *Unfaithfulness makes sorrowing Christians.*

The possession of joy necessarily implies the possession of PEACE: “A peace that passeth all understanding;” guarding and fortifying the powers of the soul against all the assaults of Satan, and keeping them calm and undisturbed in the midst of “the strife of tongues,” or the violence of “wicked and unreasonable men.” It suffers not those tumultuous passions which frequently disquiet the heart of a sinner to enter, or to reign. Where the Spirit of the living God dwells, “hate, envy, jealousy are gone.” Man is no longer influenced by a

hostile disposition toward his fellow-men. He breathes universal good-will; and “follows after peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.”

LONG-SUFFERING accompanies peace. “Unto every Christian it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on his name, but also to suffer for his sake.” It is impossible but this should be the case, so long as there are unconverted men in the world, who are under the influence of a “carnal mind which is enmity against God,” and against his cause. Reproaches, if not stripes and imprisonments, will fall to their share; and “men will say all manner of evil against them falsely for the Lord’s sake.” Nothing will be counted too vile and wicked to lay to their charge, if it will only serve to render them odious and contemptible in the eyes of the world. But these “false accusations,” and whatever else the providence of God may permit to occur, the Christian bears with “long-suffering;” with a love that is “not provoked to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.”

A Christian is so far from being moved to anger by provocations, however great, or however long-continued, or however often-repeated, that trials of that kind, do only serve to exhibit to the world the excellency of another fruit of the Spirit,—GENTLENESS. He endeavours to imitate the example of Christ, who “was led as a Lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:” That is, *he never spake in any sinful manner*; he only mildly reasoned with his enemies: “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, wherefore smitest thou me?” The “gentleness of Christ” will not allow of any expres-

sions bordering on contemptuous severity ; but requires that the whole speech and behaviour be mild, and persuasive, and affectionate, and kind. Such was the conduct of Christ, when the Jews clamoured for his blood ; and though his “gentleness” did not soften down their prejudices, or lessen their bitter cries of, “His blood be on us, and on our children !” yet, after his resurrection, it became a mighty means of confirming the doctrines he had taught, and of recommending the Christian religion unto all mankind.

While the Christian imitates so excellent a pattern of gentleness, he is also full of GOODNESS. “The Greek word,” says Mr. Wesley, “means all that is benign, soft, winning, tender, either in temper or behaviour.” It constrains him who possesses it to beam forth pity, in his very looks, towards the fallen race of Adam ; and to tell them, by his countenance, how his bowels of compassion move towards them. In performing his duty, and fearlessly reproofing sin in every shape, wheresoever and in whomsoever he meets it, goodness prevents every thing like censoriousness, rudeness, and roughness of behaviour. If goodness, or a tender concern for the welfare of immortal souls, will not permit a Christian to suffer sin in his neighbour, if it constrain him to use the sword of reproof ; it both smooths and sharpens the edge, and thereby often causes it to be successful in destroying the sin at which it is aimed.

Where there is goodness, there is also FAITH, or fidelity. He who has received the Spirit of Christ will evidence in his whole life fidelity towards God ; carefully improving every talent which has been committed to his trust, remembering the awful account he must one day render to the Judge of quick and dead. Nor will he the

less manifest fidelity towards man ; never betraying the confidence which his fellow-creatures may repose in him ; never dealing treacherously in any concern ; but, in all those affairs which others may entrust to his management, acting with the same zeal and punctuality that he would have done had those affairs been his own.

MEEKNESS is another fruit of the Spirit ; another holy temper evidenced by every Christian. All his affections and passions are well-regulated : Meekness controls and directs the whole. *Meekness is love in its most engaging form.* It is a grace that is always necessary ; since a thousand things will occur to call it into exercise, not only in the world, but in our families, and in the church of God. Meekness is entirely opposite to anger, and peevishness, and pride ; it enables a man to *bear*, to *forbear*, and to *forgive*.

Lastly follows TEMPERANCE ; a virtue that is sometimes commended, but seldom practised. Yet it is found in whomsoever the Spirit of Christ dwells. By him, moderation will be observed in eating, in drinking, in his desires, and in his hopes, and in every thing that relates to the present world. Temperance destroys, root and branch, all softness and needless self-indulgence, all love of delicacies and of gay and expensive apparel ; and it teaches a man to deny himself of every thing that is not a means of his getting and doing good.

Now if any man have the Spirit of Christ, all these fruits of the Spirit will be in him and abound. Not some merely, to the exclusion of the rest, but the whole train of graces will exist in the heart ; and especially LOVE, which is the bond and perfection of all the rest. Bad tempers are utterly inconsistent with Christianity ;

and he enjoys not the salvation of God, who is not delivered from them. Thou sayest thou hast the Spirit of Christ: "But wilt thou know, O vain man," that while thou hast not "the *mind* that was in Christ," thou "deceivest thine own heart, and thy religion is vain?" How wilt thou profess to have the Spirit of God dwelling in thee, when the fruits of the Spirit are not found? Is it not written?, "If we live in the Spirit, *let us also walk in the Spirit*. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." "Be not then deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—But another will say, "I thank God I have the fruits described dwelling in me." Then thou must be a child of God; for none can be "imitators of God," but those who are his "dear children." If thou really hast those fruits, thou must have the witness of the Spirit: For *the two blessings are inseparable*. And in proportion to the clearness of your evidence of the favour of God, will be the vigour of those graces which can flow only from a consciousness of his favour. What! Shall a man be able to discern that he hath "love, joy, peace," and so on; and yet not know that he has "received the Holy Ghost," who is the only Source of love, joy, and peace? How can he enjoy *this* "love," if God be not his Father; or *this* joy, if God be not reconciled; or *this* peace, if he be not in the divine favour? And shall the Spirit be "divided against himself," dwelling in the heart to produce those fruits, and yet keep him ignorant of the filial relation that exists between God and the believing soul? Shall we set the Spirit as the Comforter, in opposition to the Spirit as the Spirit of Adoption? O how injurious is it to vital Christianity, to hold only one

half of the truth of God ! It is one of the deepest stratagems of Satan, although so many are ignorant of his devices, to spread the notion in the Christian church, that it is possible to have the fruits of the Spirit, without the witness of the Spirit that we are born of God. Hence many rest far beneath their privileges ; and because they sometimes feel a *degree* of love, and joy, and peace, when they are under “ the drawings of the Father,” mistake that preparing influence from God, for the “ love, and joy, and peace” of *Christian believers* : Hence *while those drawings continue*, they *infer*, what is not really true, that they are the children of God ; but when those drawings are less sensible, and their comfort is gone, they *infer* that perhaps they are not the children of God, and are full of doubts and fears. Now all this *Jewish Christianity*, so to speak ; (if that be not too honourable a name for it, and does not convey too strong an idea of the actual condition of those who rest in it ;) this *Jewish Christianity* arises from not honouring the Spirit, by maintaining it to be *absolutely essential to the Christian character*, that he should “ bear witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God.” No dangerous consequences can follow from scripturally exhibiting this privilege of all the saints ; nothing would so directly tend to increase the purity of the Christian church ; nothing would so powerfully operate to the promoting of “ lovely tempers” in them that call Jesus, Lord ; and those *tempers* would convince the world, better than all our arguments and reasonings, that God had really “ cleansed the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, enabling us perfectly to love him, and worthily to magnify his holy name.”

2. Holy words are another proof to the world, that

we have the Spirit of Christ. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and all thy saints shall bless thee. They shall *speak* of the glory of thy kingdom, and *talk* of thy power; to *make known* to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." (Psalm cxlv. 10—12.) A Christian man will take every opportunity of recommending Christ to his fellow-creatures; and it will be his glory to exalt the name of the Redeemer, by "ordering his conversation aright" in the world. His conversation will always be "as becometh the gospel of Christ;" chaste, pure, simple, holy, and devout. On the Lord's day, especially, he will be careful not "to speak his own words, or to think his own thoughts:" Throughout that day, it shall appear as though he were constantly breathing forth the prayer, "Hallowed be thy name!" And in the ordinary tenor of his life, when the duties of his station require him to speak of earthly things, still his mind is heavenly, and a savour of Christianity runs through all his converse, which evinces the purity of his heart, and the devotedness of his soul to God. Being "filled with the Spirit," it is natural to him to be "giving of thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." "The word of Christ dwells in him richly in all wisdom;" so that he is enabled to offer up every "word," as well as deed, "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him." His spiritual and heavenly conversation amongst men, is an evidence to the world, (although his words may not be pleasing to the ungodly,) that in him the Spirit of God dwells.

3. Holy actions are seen in his life. It cannot surely

be necessary to insist upon it, as an incontrovertible truth, that every one, who has the Spirit of Christ, is free from immorality. That is self-evident. For an adulterer, a fornicator, a Sabbath-breaker, a drunkard, a liar, a blasphemer, or any such character, to pretend to have the Spirit of Christ, is so glaring an absurdity, so contradictory to the whole tenor of scripture, so shocking to common sense, that it would be a waste of time to combat with such an idle dream. We know whose they are, whom they serve, and to whom they belong. "They are of their father the devil, for his works they do." "Know ye not," says Paul, "that his servants ye are, to whom ye yield yourselves to obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"—This last phrase, *obedience unto righteousness*, is exactly descriptive of the character of a Christian's obedience. Proceeding as it does from the grace of the Spirit who abides in his heart, it is holy and acceptable to God the Father, through the mediation of Jesus; and is therefore a means of continuing his *present* righteousness, or justification; and, because of that obedience, "a crown of *righteousness* shall be given to him in that day, when every man shall be judged according to his works." The Christian is the only man on earth who can perform "good works;" for they only who "are saved by grace, through faith," are the "workmanship of the Spirit, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." But all who are "predestinated through Jesus Christ, unto the adoption of sons," are pure indeed, for they are "holy and without blame before God in love." Their works all spring from the purest principle,—"love to God and man:" They are directed to the noblest end,—the glory of God, and

the happiness of the whole world.—He who has the Spirit of Christ, is *just* in all his actions; he “wrongs no man, he defrauds no man.” He never “borrows without a probability of paying; or takes up goods without a probability of paying for them.” In trade and business, he has no reserves, no equivocations, no double-dealing, nor does he think himself at liberty to make the best of every bargain; but in every case he doth what is *right*, because he exceedingly loves that law,—“all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” He is *benevolent*; *for justice is the basis of all his charities*: If a man have the Spirit of Christ, he cannot shut up his bowels of compassion against his fellow men. He is all *eye* and *ear*, and *hand*, to the miseries of the human race; nor can he think of hoarding up wealth, so long as there are widows and orphans, and the poor, the afflicted, and the destitute existing in the world. If he be poor, he is *charitable* in poverty; and often finds a brother-man, to whom he says, “Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.” He is an universal philanthropist, a holy patriot; he is a blessing to his country, and a blessing to mankind. You see Christ in his actions, for he “walks as Christ also walked;” and like his Lord and Master, “he glorifies God on earth, till he has finished the work he hath given him to do.”

4. These being the evidences by which it may be known to the world, that we have the Spirit of Christ, I beseech you to consider how far they are conspicuous in your character. If the scripture rule be, “By their fruits ye shall know them;” what are the fruits you bear? Are you Christians indeed? Would Christ own you, if he were upon earth? Are you filled with

the love of God and man? Does it constrain you earnestly to pray for the salvation of your fellow-creatures? Do you ever pray for yourselves? Are you happy? Does your "soul magnify the Lord, and your Spirit rejoice in God your Saviour?" Or are you miserable, gloomy, and melancholy? Have you "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keeping your heart and mind through Christ Jesus?" Or have you "no peace?" Are you "long-suffering, gentle, easy to be intreated," meek, and lowly, and temperate in all things? Or are you soon angry, revengeful, proud, haughty, high-minded and puffed up with vanities? Are you "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness?" Or are you carnal in heart, in lip, and in life? Are you honest, sober, chaste, faithful? And in all your outward conduct, do you pursue mercy, justice, and truth? Or are you impure and unholy, sacrificing *right to interest*, and regarding time much more than an approaching eternity? In one word: Does Christ Jesus dwell in you by his Holy Spirit? Or are you "without God, and without hope in the world?"

These questions are all of the utmost importance. On the manner in which they are determined, your everlasting happiness or woe depends:—For, says the apostle, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

III. The awful condition of him who is without the Spirit of Christ.

1. Christ disowns him in this present life. Even now "he is none of his,"—does not truly belong to him. He cannot belong to Christ, because he is always grieving and resisting the Holy Spirit. To grieve the Spirit

is to reject Christ, and to refuse his salvation. Christ is now exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high ; we know him after the flesh no more ; he is no longer seen as the man of sorrows, humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ; but he comes unto us by the Spirit, whom he sends forth to convince and save the world. He who receives not that Comforter, receives not the Saviour who sent him, nor the Father who promised him ; nor shall he have any share in those *peculiar* privileges and blessings which are bestowed upon all believers. See how the apostle connects the character and the blessings in 1 Cor. iii. 21—23. “ *All things are yours ;—* whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; *all are yours ; and ye are Christ’s ;* and Christ is God’s.” Every thing therefore depends on being Christ’s ; he who has not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him, is neither Christ’s disciple, nor God’s son. He has no “ redemption through the blood of Jesus, the forgiveness of sins ;” no “ comforts of the Holy Ghost ;” no “ exceedingly great and precious promises, making him a partaker of the Divine nature ;” he has no holiness, no happiness, no hope of glory. Neither has he any interest in that special intercession which Christ makes for his own followers : “ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory.” Nor will the Saviour ever thus plead for him, unless he receive “ the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” and, by his gracious power, be begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Now is it not a sad thing, to be disowned by Christ

himself? By that Saviour in whose name we have been baptized, whom we call LORD, and whose religion we profess to believe? What avails it to call ourselves "Christians," if Christ says, *Ye are none of mine!* "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." But who are ye? Ye "hear not my voice" in my Spirit, neither do ye "follow me" in the regeneration; nor hath "my Father given you to me," *as my sheep*: But "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you; inwardly ye are ravening wolves. Ye are known by your fruits."—So then, "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham," or Christians in name by natural descent, "are they all children," the adopted sons of God: "But in Isaac shall thy seed be called." That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: But "the children of the promise,"—those who "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," (Gal. iii. 14.)—"are counted for the seed." (Rom. ix. 6—8.) But they who have not that Spirit of Faith, though they boast, "We have Abraham for our father," are none of Christ's.

2. Christ will disown them in the day of judgment. In that day he would be *ashamed* of them; ashamed to confess them as his disciples, before the Father and the holy angels. If he were then to claim them as his own, he would destroy all distinction between good and evil; and it could no longer be enquired,—*"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?"* But who can suppose, that a

child of the devil, who has lived and died in the service of Satan, and without the love of God, shall be “numbered with all the saints in glory everlasting?” Christ hath put a mark upon his own, he hath sealed them with his Holy Spirit; and the motto of that divine signature reads, “The Lord knoweth them that are his. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.” They became thus “sealed with that Spirit of promise,” “sealed unto the day of redemption,” when they believed on Christ, and found pardon through his name. And, if they “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,” by “trusting to their own righteousness, and committing iniquity,” the impression of that holy sealing will be discoverable in the day of the Lord, and Christ will joy to recognize them as those that “called, and chosen, and faithful.” But they who are unfaithful, and “without holiness,” because the Spirit of Christ dwelt not in them, shall be numbered with “the workers of iniquity.” They shall be brought to the judgment-seat, as the enemies of Christ;—deemed his enemies because of their having continually “done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” God will be the avenger of all such; and they shall find that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! He then who is not saved by the Spirit of Christ in this present life, shall be doomed to eternal perdition by Christ, when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

3. It is of great importance to consider thoroughly *the universality* of this truth: “If *any man* have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” It matters not what his outward condition may be; whether he be rich or poor, wise or ignorant, bond or free. “In every nation” where the gospel is preached, “he that feareth God”

with a filial fear, and “worketh righteousness” through the power of justifying faith, is “accepted of him;” but whosoever hath not an obedient “faith in the Son of God, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Every one ought to seek God in the means of grace, and strive to live unblameably in the world; and whosoever thus sincerely follows the light he has at present, without resting in a mere form of godliness, shall find that light increasing more and more, till he “sees the salvation of God:” “To him that hath, more shall be given.” “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.” But, on the other hand,—though a man be moral in his general deportment *in the eyes of the world*: (For he cannot be moral *in the sight of God* while he has not faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,)—though he regularly attend the house of God,—and though he pray, and fast, and communicate on all proper occasions,—yet *if he rest there*, and receive not the Holy Spirit to lead him into all truth, bringing to his heart the enjoyment of pardon and purity, verily he shall have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

O that those of you who are resting in the form of godliness without the power, would lay these things to heart! Even many publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of God before you, because it is so difficult to convince you that you are not fit for that kingdom already. The truth however is, that you have no “meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light:” You no more belong to Christ than did the Scribes and Pharisees of old; for, notwithstanding you bear the Christian name, you have drunk into their spirit, and are exactly imitating their conduct. Those ordi-

nances which should lead you to Christ, are most awfully perverted; by mistaking the *means* for the *end*, you make them hindrances to the salvation of your soul. Nay, it is well if you do not consider all that has been advanced about receiving the Spirit of Christ as mere enthusiasm, and disbelieve the whole from beginning to end. In your zeal against enthusiasm you do not perceive that the *very existence of Christianity depends on the continued influences of the Holy Ghost amongst the sons of men*. The agency of "the Lord the Spirit" is as necessary still to *preserve* it in the world, as it was to *establish* it in the days of the apostles: Yea, it is more necessary; for in the apostles' days, the only opposing parties were "Jews and Greeks;" but now a host of Christians rise up, in every land, to deny the work of the Spirit in the soul of man. Seeing then that miracles have ceased, or are of rare occurrence in these years of unbelief, and that we have not the gift of tongues, nor the power of smiting with blindness every Elymas, who, "being full of all subtlety and mischief, seeks to pervert the right ways of the Lord;" what could preserve the Christianity of the New Testament from being completely overturned, but the mighty power of that Spirit, who throughout "the last days, continues to be poured out on all flesh?" *By the conversion of sinners the Holy Ghost refutes the arguments of philosophers*; and by "*saving them that believe*," He daily "destroys the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Yet to them it happens according to that awful scripture: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and *perish!* For I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts xiii. 41.)

5. But why should any of you perish through unbelief? Why should you not believe, and see the salvation of God? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Is it a thing beyond his power to give the Holy Spirit unto the sons of men? And if he be able, is he not willing to grant us this inestimable blessing? Has he not *actually* bestowed the grace of his Spirit upon you all? Are ye not yourselves witnesses for God, that there is still a Holy Ghost poured out upon the world? Whence proceed that light which has sometimes shone upon your understanding, and those convictions that have occasionally smote your conscience? Did you produce them by your own power? Try: *Re-produce them now*; call for light and let it now shoot a new ray across the mind, and for conviction that you may now feel a new pang of sorrow, if these things be at your own command? But if they come from God, then know indeed that the kingdom of God hath come nigh unto you. And shall God the Spirit have access to the human mind occasionally to convince of sin, and shall he not be able to convert the soul? Then we cannot possibly be saved. Then would it be rational to “spend our days in grief, and our years in sighing,” because we were not born in the favoured age of the apostles; and we ought to rend our garments through despair, when we open the Bible, and read what multitudes had their “sins blotted out, when Jesus Christ was preached unto them,” while we can never hope for that salvation, the converting power of the Spirit having been confined to one age and to one generation! But if the Spirit can now convert the soul, what should hinder him from converting you? “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” “Repent and believe, *every one of you*, in the

name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call."

6. Have any of you received the Holy Ghost as "the Spirit of bondage unto fear?" Let me encourage you to wait for the consolation of Israel. It is the office of the Spirit to glorify Christ; the more you renounce self, and strive to come to Christ as a guilty sinner, the more will that Spirit help your infirmities, and the sooner will he bring you to that Saviour who is exalted to pardon and save all that are lost and undone. Give yourself up wholly to the Divine Spirit, that he may "work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure;" and it shall not be long before "the Lord whom you seek will come suddenly to his temple," pardoning and cleansing the soul, and choosing it for his own habitation. And of your heart he will say, "This is my rest for ever: Here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

7. Finally. Let all those in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells, be thankful for the "great salvation" they enjoy; and let them "walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith they are called." "Much will be required, where much is given." Be careful, then, that ye "receive not the grace of God in vain." Purpose in your heart faithfully to improve all the gracious influences with which you may be favoured; and believe in God for all the help that may be needful to enable you to accomplish what you so fully design. Resolve to be a Joshua, or a Caleb; though thousands around you fall short of the promises through unbelief. *The Spirit of Christ dwells in you to accomplish all the promises of Christ; that is the very end for which he is sent: You have, therefore, the Promiser himself pleading for you in heaven, and the*

Agent, who is to "bring them all to pass," abiding in the heart. O then "walk in the Spirit;"—"live in the Spirit;"—"be filled with the Spirit:" Be holy, be always diligent, and be ever expecting to "receive abundantly above all that you can ask or think, according to his power who worketh in you." And "the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, will, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever." AMEN.

SERMON X.

LAZARUS' RESURRECTION.

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: And his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.—JOHN xi. 43, 44.

THERE IS a fine prophecy in Hosea, relative to the Redeemer of the world. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!"

When the prophet uttered this prediction, he had the field of slaughter in full view. He saw "Samaria made desolate" by war; and calamities of the most terrible kind had befallen her inhabitants. Her warriors had perished "by the sword;" her "infants had been dashed in pieces;" her pregnant women and the fruit of their womb had been destroyed together, in the most cruel and barbarous manner. In the midst of such a scene, death is beheld as keeping his carnival, and rioting amongst the slain. But in the height of his triumphs, with the prey between his teeth, and heaps of the dying and wounded all around him, he is met by our Redeemer, who first declares his purpose to ransom the captives, and then accosts the victor with a lofty pro-

phesy of his final and utter overthrow: "O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!"

It is impossible, without a paraphrase, to express all the sublime ideas which are contained in the original text.* You will observe, the word is plural,—“thy plagues.” It is as though the Redeemer had said:—“I will combine all pestilences together in one, to sweep thee away at a stroke, at a single word, O grave! I will be nothing less than *thy destruction*, thine extermination, thine entire excision; no vestige of death, nor of his empire over immortal man, shall remain.”

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, applies this prophecy to the final resurrection of the just in the judgment-day. He sees the “last enemy” expiring under those plagues, and exultingly exclaims, “O death, where is thy sting?” He beholds the prison houses of the tyrant demolished, and triumphantly inquires, “O grave, where is thy victory?”

But before that day arrives, the sacred history presents us with a few instances of the Redeemer's power over the grave, which may be regarded as a figure of that resurrection which is yet to come. Enoch and Elijah he translated to heaven. He raised the daughter of Jairus from death; and the son of the widow of Nain. And he raised Lazarus from the grave, even after he had seen corruption. He performed these miracles, that his disciples might be encouraged in suffering, and in death, to commit the keeping of their souls and bodies unto him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator; and that the Jews might be more deeply impressed with those awful words which he had

* Hosea xiii. 14., אדני דבריך מות אדני קטבך שאול

uttered while ministering amongst them: “Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth,—they that have good unto the resurrection of life,—and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”

To the history of Lazarus’ Resurrection, I would now direct your attention, endeavouring

I. To illustrate the facts recorded: And

II. To apply those doctrines arising from them, or connected with them.

I. The facts of Lazarus’ Resurrection.

1. The first thing which requires our attention is,—the family whose history is recorded, with the place of their abode. “Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.” (Verse 1.)

The family consisted of three individuals,—Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus. Martha was probably the elder sister, on which account the chief care of the household devolved upon her. In Luke x. 38, we read that Martha received the Saviour into “*her* house.” It does not appear probable, from the Evangelist Luke’s account, that Lazarus at that time abode with his sisters, though, from his being here called “Lazarus of *Bethany*,” we may conclude that he had been for some considerable time residing in the same town with them. It was, perhaps, Lazarus’ affliction that brought him under his sisters’ roof, that their kind care and attention might contribute to render effectual the means employed for his recovery.

This family possessed *genuine piety*. They cordially

believed in Christ, as the true Messiah. Mary and Martha exhibited such proofs of faith in the Godhead and power of Christ, in those conversations which they had with him after the death of their brother, as are scarcely paralleled in the gospel history. They exceedingly loved the Redeemer; and honoured, and revered, and served him most cheerfully, and with all the heart. Their piety was deep, yet unobtrusive; those excellent women seem to have been "keepers at home." Piety was the source of every virtue; and its influence was the means of preserving domestic happiness uninterrupted.

They were *an affectionate family*. No jealousies, no disputes interrupted their peace; nor, when Christ visited them, was there any ambition which should be the greatest. They were happy in each other's society, ministered daily to each other's necessities, and shared alike in each other's sorrows and joys. How tenderly the sisters loved Lazarus, is manifest from the depth of sorrow evidenced at his death. Mary especially felt most exquisitely: And when "she arose hastily, and went out" to meet Jesus, the Jews, who had witnessed her grief, concluded, "she goeth unto the grave, to weep there." (John xi. 31.) What an amiable sight is a loving, Christian family! "How good and pleasant a thing it is, to behold them dwelling together in unity." Let us every one strive, in our respective stations in life, to promote family peace, and love, and harmony; each one living for the good of those within his own circle, and endeavouring to spread the influence of religion, as the only means of correcting the evils, and of alleviating the sorrows, attendant on our condition in this lower world.

The family was “*given to hospitality.*” Diligent in the management of their temporal concerns, and, as it regards themselves, frugal in their expences, they were enabled to entertain our Lord with great generosity, and to provide more plenteously than he desired. And if Martha, who was “*cumbered about much serving,*” is not, in that respect, an example for imitation; she is worthy of being followed in that *personal attention* which she gave to her domestic concerns. No family is well-regulated, where the mistress of the household neglects her duty. To reproach servants for carelessness, is then too often the only method of apologizing for her own want of diligence, or of prudence, in managing her affairs. This was not the case with Martha; if she really had domestics, which is not certain, she was not above putting forth her own hands to labour; nor are we to suppose that Mary was of an indolent turn, because, on a special occasion, she chose to avoid *the extreme* of carefulness in which Martha indulged, and preferred sitting at the feet of our Lord:

This family was *highly esteemed by Jesus Christ.* “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” (Verse 5.) In his journey to and from Jerusalem, he dwelt at their house. Highly favoured family! To have for a guest, not merely a prophet, or an “angel entertained unawares,” but Jehovah, the Lord of all, “God, manifest in the flesh.” What benignity shone forth in his countenance! What grace flowed from his lips! What dignity of love was conspicuous in all his actions! What prayer ascended to heaven, when He, in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed,” led their devotions, and by his example “taught them how to pray to his Father and to their Father, to his

God, and their God!"—Let us rejoice to know that though we have not the bodily presence of Christ with us, still he is willing by the Holy Spirit to reveal himself to our hearts. If, like Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, we believe on him, he will love us, and come unto us, and make his abode with us. He will consecrate every room in our habitation with his blessed presence, so that our ordinary dwelling may with propriety be called, BETH-EL, *The House of God*. Let us give up ourselves to his service, and thereby invite him to our abode; knowing that he always dwells with truly Christian families, and on them "commands his blessing to rest, even life for evermore."

This family was considerably *above poverty and indigence*: They seem to have been placed in comfortable and respectable circumstances by the providence of God. Had not this been the case, Martha could not have provided so abundantly for the entertainment of our Lord. Nor could Mary have procured, after Lazarus' resurrection, "a pound of ointment of spikenard, *very costly*, wherewith to anoint the Saviour's feet." (John xii. 3.) The value of it, according to the calculation of Judas, was "three hundred pence:" That is, about *nine pounds, fourteen shillings*. The cost of the ointment evidently proves, that the family was not poor. Those who died in indigence were interred in some common burial place; but the rich had their own private sepulchres, or tombs. It is observed by the Evangelist, concerning Joseph of Arimathea, in whose "own new tomb, hewn out in the rock" the dead body of our Saviour was laid, that he was "a rich man." (Matt. xxvii. 57—60.) And this happened agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah: "And he made his grave with the

wicked, and with *the rich* in his death." (Isaih liii. 9.)* Lazarus likewise had his own tomb; it "was a cave," and, as was customary, "a stone lay upon it;" (John xi. 38 :) That is, was placed at the mouth or entry of the cave. Hence, when we consider the apparent circumstances of the family, we shall not be surprised to find, that, instead of being obscure and unknown individuals, they were very generally known and highly esteemed; so that, at the death of Lazarus, not only the villagers of Bethany, but "many of the Jews from Jerusalem also, came to comfort Martha and Mary concerning their brother." (Verse 19.)

Now it is of considerable importance to "keep in memory" the outward circumstances of the family, and the circle in which they moved, because it affords an illustration of the infinite wisdom of God, in selecting such an individual, as the subject of *the greatest miracle* performed by the Messiah in the days of his flesh. In itself considered, it would have been as great a miracle to have raised a poor beggar, as to have raised so respectable a man as Lazarus from the dead. But the design of Christ would not have been equally answered, which was, to give the Jews *the most undeniable evidence* of his Messiahship by the mighty works that he performed. Here was no opportunity for a caviller to object, that any collusion subsisted between the parties. Lazarus was a man well known. The reality of the miracle was unquestionable. The eye-witnesses of it were some

* Or rather: "And his grave *was given*," or appointed, to have been with the wicked—the malefactors with whom he suffered: So his enemies designed; but that kind of humiliation being unnecessary, the providence of God frustrated their intention, and so ordered it, that he was "with the rich in his death."

of the principal persons from Jerusalem itself. The chief priests dared not attempt to invalidate the fact, nor even to question Lazarus about it, as they had done the "man who was born blind." (John 9.)—But when, instead of yielding to the irresistible conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, they were more than ever determined on his death, and "sought to put Lazarus to death also;" (John xii. 10,) they were in great justice abandoned to their own invincible prejudices, and obstinate unbelief: "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*" (John xii. 39, 40.)

The same wise arrangement of providence appears in regard to *the place where the miracle was performed*. It was at Bethany, a town nigh unto Jerusalem, about two miles, or fifteen furlongs off. Had the miracle been wrought in Galilee, some of the sceptics of Judea might have pretended to question it, on account of the distance of places, and because of the general contempt in which the Galileans were held. Had it been performed in Jerusalem itself—considering, on the one hand, the rooted hatred of the Chief Priests against Christ, and their determination to accomplish his death,—and on the other hand, the extraordinary sensation in his favour which such a miracle would probably have produced in the minds of the turbulent populace,—the most dangerous consequences might have followed, which the enemies of Christ would not have failed to improve, by representing him as one who "stirred up the people." Christ, therefore, raised Lazarus from the dead, at a small town not far distant from Jerusalem, where a good number might be

present as undoubted witnesses of the fact, without affording his enemies the least possibility of justly accusing him of being guilty of sedition. It is true, the wisdom and prudence of Christ did not prevent his enemies from alledging that such was his crime; for when Pilate would have acquitted him, "they were the more fierce, saying, *He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.*" (Luke xxiii. 5.) Yet, in the eyes of all unprejudiced Jews, it must have been clearly manifest that "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." (Isaiah liii. 9.)

God, therefore, who "determines the bounds of our habitation," had, in the order of his providence, cast the lot of Mary and Martha at Bethany, and brought Lazarus thither to sicken and die, with a view to the performance of this miracle, that he might therein shew forth the glory of his incarnate Son. There is a wonderful connection in all the events of the lives of eminently pious characters. If they never miss their providential way, Christ gives unto them two special proofs of his favour and love.—FIRST, He chooses for them the place of their habitation, appointing in what city, or town, or village they shall dwell, with a view to his own glory in their present and eternal happiness; although, as in the case of Martha and Mary, it may sometimes be a habitation of affliction.—SECONDLY, By his spiritual presence he gladdens their hearts in the home he has chosen, teaching them "in whatever state they are, therewith to be content," and encouraging them to hope for eternal felicity with himself in the world to come. Thus the cloudy pillar leads them to the lot of their inheritance; and then its glory dwells upon their blest abode. If we live and die *where* God wills, and *as* he wills, we must be happy.

We see this remark exemplified in the next prominent part of this history.

2. The circumstances of Lazarus' death.

It was not *sudden and unexpected*; for Lazarus was "sick:" (Verse 1:) And his sickness was of some continuance; for his sisters at length sent unto Christ, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." (Verse 3.) And after Christ had received that message, he still "abode two days in the same place where he was," (verse 5,) until he knew that Lazarus was dead. These circumstances were all wisely permitted by the providence of God, that, the previous affliction of Lazarus being currently known, there might be no room left to doubt the reality of his death. Some of the Pharisees did not believe, concerning one to whom Christ gave sight, that "he had been blind," (John ix. 18,) until they were forced to admit the fact; much less then would they have credited the resurrection of Lazarus, if his death had been sudden; for they would have made use of such a circumstance to insinuate the suspicious nature of the miracle which our Lord might have wrought. Lazarus was afflicted; and at length he died; both his affliction and his death being made subservient to the Redeemer's glory.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." As throughout life he measures out their afflictions, and disposes of every event relating to them, in infinite wisdom and goodness; so does he *in an especial manner order the circumstances of their last affliction*, when they are about to be gathered unto their fathers. He knows best *when, where, at what age, in what manner, and by what means*, to remove them from earth to heaven. In their last moments he will lay no more upon

them, than they shall be enabled to bear ; for he will especially then “remember that they are dust,” when they are about to return to the dust from whence they were taken. “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God ! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”

Lazarus' death was peaceful. Jesus said unto his disciples, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” (Verse 11.)—“Our Friend !” What an endearing expression ; and how strongly does it mark the condescension of the Son of God ! He is not ashamed to call a sinful worm his FRIEND ; no, not in his lowest state of degradation, when “the body is dead because of sin.” It is a common friendship which Christ has with all the saints ; and which all the saints have with him, and with each other. It springs from the purest love. It is friendship of the most exalted kind. It is begun on earth ; it cannot be dissolved by death ; it shall be perpetuated throughout eternity. Lazarus “slept in Jesus.” He died as he had lived, steadily believing in Christ, and therefore “his end was peace.” He calmly resigned his spirit to God ; and it seems, without any violent struggle with the last enemy, he entered into that “rest which remaineth for the people of God.” Thousands, yea, tens of thousands, have been blest with an end quite as peaceful as Lazarus had. And thou, O christian believer, shalt be one more added to the number ! Live to God, and God will take care of thee in a dying hour. A violent wind may drive the chaff away ; but the wheat shall be carefully gathered into the garner. Though we know not the time of our death, yet let this be our rejoicing,—that “for us to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

But though Lazarus was the friend of Christ, and his

end was peace, still to his relatives and friends it was a *sad and deeply afflictive event*. When affectionate Thomas heard of it, his soul clave unto the soul of his deceased brother, and he said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with him." (Verse 16.) Martha and Mary wept at Jesus' feet: each of the sisters relieved the sorrows of her heart in the same words;—in words which they had perhaps several times repeated in condoling with each other:—"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." (Verses 21.—32.) Mary's tenderness of heart was deeply affecting: When she was weeping, prostrate in the dust at the feet of our Lord, the Jews who followed her could not forbear weeping also; nor could Jesus refrain from sympathy, without forcibly restraining the feelings of his compassionate heart. The sight of so much sorrow touched him to the quick: "He groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled;" and, with a tremulous voice, tenderly inquired, "Where have ye laid him?" Martha and Mary, glad to visit the tomb where lay the remains of so dear a brother, said to him, with unutterable feelings of grief, "Lord, come and see!" The broken sentence went to the heart of our compassionate Saviour:—"Jesus wept." Nor were his tears few, for his distress was so deep, that the Jews could not forbear exclaiming, "Behold, how he loved him!"

If then Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus, and his sisters also, though they firmly believed in a future resurrection; it is lawful for us to weep at a parent's, or at a brother's grave. We ought to sorrow, but "not as those without hope." Christianity neither destroys, nor lessens, the sensibilities of the heart; but it regulates and sanctifies them all. The decease of friends ought to

be the spring-tide of grief; because we then *see* in their degradation, and *feel* in our loss, the deplorable consequences of sin. Our natural tears ought to be mingled with tears of penitence and humiliation before God, on account of our fall in Adam. Then shall we find, that it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; and our chastened sorrow shall prove a great means of weaning us from the present world, of promoting spirituality of mind, and of increasing in our hearts that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." If, like Martha and Mary, we mourn over bereavements *at the feet of Jesus Christ*, they will assuredly be sanctified, and we shall not be without consolation. The interest which Christ feels in the sorrows and losses of his disciples, is apparent from a third particular in this history:

3. The Saviour's visit to Bethany; his conversation with the sisters of Lazarus; and their journey to the tomb.

Christ's visit to Bethany on this occasion was peculiarly seasonable in regard to himself. The time of his ministry on earth was drawing to a close. He knew that the hour of his sufferings and sacrificial death was at hand: How highly proper then was it,—before he so humbled himself as to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and submitted to lie for three days as under the arrest of death in his own dominions,—that he should demonstrate to the world his own power over death and the grave, and thus shew that, even in his humiliation, he was Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Nor was it less seasonable in regard to his disciples. The arraignment of their Master at the bar of Pilate, his

cruel mockings and scourgings, his crucifixion and death, were sad and mournful events, calculated to shake their confidence in him, and to disappoint those expectations of his approaching kingdom which they had so long cherished. The effect which his humiliation produced on their minds, is apparent from the words of Cleopas, when journeying to Emmaus:—"We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." (Luke xxiv. 21.) Yet the recollection of Lazarus' resurrection, which they had beheld *only a few days before*, must have tended to buoy up their hopes, and to preserve them from utter despair. Even when Christ was entombed, while Lazarus was living with them, as one of their associates, could they absolutely doubt of his being the Messiah?

But the special object which Christ had in view, in undertaking this visit to Bethany, was, to sympathize with the afflicted, and to comfort them in the time of distress. The conduct of Jesus on this occasion exhibits the most perfect model of friendship. It is true, Christ could have prevented the sorrows of his friends, by restoring Lazarus to health, instead of suffering him to die; but we must remember, that he is *God*, as well as *man*, and will, therefore, do *that which is best ultimately*; always connecting, in his comprehensive view, time with eternity. He saw that it would be abundantly more for the glory of God, to raise Lazarus from the dead, than to restore him from sickness. His resurrection was a means of bringing glory to God in both worlds, at the same moment of time. "The spirits of the just made perfect" saw, with unutterable joy and gratitude, *to what degree they were "made perfect,"* in the cheerfulness with which the disembodied spirit of

Lazarus left their pure society, and their exalted happiness, to inhabit once more a dying body in the valley of tears! The disciples on earth had a demonstration of the mighty power of God, and of that connection which subsists between mortals on earth and the invisible state. It was, therefore, necessary that Lazarus should die. It occasioned, amongst his kindred, temporary sorrow; but that was more than recompensed by the unexpected joy of his resurrection from the dead.

How interesting, and how edifying was our Lord's conversation with the mourning sisters! How consolatory were the first words he addressed to Martha: "Thy brother shall rise again!" Jesus Christ speaks *as though death itself had no power to destroy the relationship of pious kindred*. "THY BROTHER shall rise again:" Thou shalt see him, thou shalt recognize him, thou shalt hail him as he who was thy brother upon earth. O what a joyous thought is it, when weeping at the grave of a Christian friend, that the same body which we commit, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," shall be raised again. We shall see his body all transformed and glorious, and shall enjoy communion with his spirit, in the realms of bliss unutterable, where "there shall be no more curse."

Of the truth of our Lord's remark, Martha was fully assured: From her reply we perceive, that the Old Testament was sufficient to give clear views of a future resurrection of the body, and of the judgment-day. "Martha saith unto him, *I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day*. Jesus said unto her,"—we may conceive with the utmost solemnity, and in a manner that expressed his dignity and majesty—"I AM"—not *I will be* when exalted, but even now in my hu-

miliation—"I AM the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.—Believest thou this?" O what inexpressible comfort flows from believing these words! Comfort *in regard to the dead*; they shall yet live. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." Comfort *in regard to ourselves*; if we live believingly till our last hour, "we shall never die" eternally; but we shall "rest from our labours, and our works will follow us." We shall *die in the arms of him who is the Resurrection and the Life*, and who saith, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death." Hades is mentioned before death; because he will admit our souls into Paradise, before the grave is opened to receive our mortal remains.

When Jesus had thus spoken to Martha, and she had professed her faith in him, "she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, *The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*" Doubtless Jesus had inquired concerning Mary. "As soon as Mary heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him." Noble example, for the imitation of those tender spirits that have most of sensibility at the bereavement of friends and kindred! Let them not be inconsolable, and yield themselves a prey to grief; but, whenever the Master calls for their active services, by presenting an opportunity of doing good, let them arise quickly, and engage in it; and they shall find thereby their sorrows assuaged, and prospects increasingly bright of eternal glory opening to their view.

The place where Martha and Mary met Jesus was without the town; and, it seems, Jesus did not immediately enter Bethany, but went with the sisters, and his disciples, and the Jews who followed Mary, to the place of Lazarus' tomb. What an affecting spectacle! Never did funeral present so solemn a mourning. Martha wept. Mary wept. The Jews were also weeping. The disciples wept. "Jesus wept." See the majesty of grief! Here were no frantic ravings, no extravagant lamentations; but such a sorrow as became saints, and such a keenness of distress as was not unworthy of the Son of God. At length they reach the dear spot where lay a beloved disciple, friend, and brother! "Jesus, again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it."

4. The Resurrection of Lazarus.

Interesting was the conversation that now took place at the grave of the deceased. "Jesus said, *Take ye away the stone.* Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, *Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath bath been dead* [or rather, *in the grave*, see 17,] *your days.*" His body now is mere corruption, though it has not had time to decompose, and return to dust: It is nothing but one offensive, putrid mass.—But "Jesus saith unto her"—(O let us mark the memorable words!)—"Said I not unto thee, that, *if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*"—It seems then, that the performance of this astonishing miracle depended in some degree on Martha's faith. There are cases in which we are called to believe *for others*; and what God will do *for them*, depends in part on the confidence we exercise on their behalf, when we make our requests known to God. We are to consider nothing as

impossible, but we are to "believe, that we may see the glory of God."

The stone having been rolled away from the mouth of the cave, "Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.*" Jesus Christ would not perform this miracle without prayer. He sought to shew to the world, that he was "one with the Father;" and to teach mankind, by his own example, to acknowledge their dependance upon God. But how remarkable are the expressions used in his petition: "Father, I thank thee that *thou hast heard me.*" Jesus' tears and groanings were prayers, before he uttered a word; and the Father heard those powerful intercessions while the Redeemer was travelling to the tomb of his friend. At Lazarus' grave Jesus offered thanksgiving:—"Father, I thank thee." It becomes us in the midst of our sorrow for the loss of kindred, to offer up praise to God, that the intercessions of Christ on behalf of his saints *have all been accepted of the Father*; so that we may confidently rely on the fulfilment of that sure word of promise, "Them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him."

"When Jesus had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, Come forth!*"—What indescribable majesty! Here is no pomp: But, O! what greatness! It is the command of God! It was obeyed in a moment! The corruptible was changed from its state of corruption; the soul inhabited her former tabernacle; life flowed in all the veins, and vigour diffused itself throughout the frame. There scarcely seemed to have been any process in the work: Jehovah spake, and it was done. "He that had been dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: And his face was bound about

with a napkin.”—What an amazing spectacle! Every eye fixes its gaze upon the solemn scene! It is Lazarus! The Jews see it is Lazarus! The disciples see it is Lazarus! Martha and Mary see, through floods of tears, that it is their own brother Lazarus! The same features,—though one may suppose his countenance to have been irradiated, and brightened with a benignant smile, expressive in some degree of that happiness which his spirit had enjoyed in the blissful presence of God. And though the Evangelist has not recorded it, we may safely conclude that his first act was adoration at the feet of him who is the Resurrection and the Life! Then Jesus saith unto them, “*Loose him*” from the bandages of his grave clothes, “*and let him go.*” At the last day, however, none of those vestiges of death shall be found upon the saints, for they shall rise immortal.

5. It only remains to consider the conclusion of this whole history.

The miracle was lasting. It was not a temporary resurrection; for Lazarus lived long afterwards. “Ecclesiastical history informs us, that Lazarus was now thirty years old, and that he lived thirty years after Christ’s ascension.” We find that he was, some days after, present at a feast, with our Lord in Bethany: “Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany; where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at table with him.” (xii. 12.) Here Mary shewed her affectionate gratitude, by “anointing the feet of Jesus, and wiping them with her hair, so that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” A grateful heart never knows how to express sufficiently the obli-

gation it feels to Christ: And, seeing we have Christ's poor with us now, though not his bodily presence, we are called to expend our all upon them, and he will regard it as done unto himself.

How odious do the covetousness and envy of Judas appear! "Why," said he, "was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" Did not he see Lazarus sitting at the same table with himself, in the presence of their common Master? Did he not know all the circumstances of his resurrection? Why not then allow lowly Mary to indulge in the effusions of gratitude, and honour Christ in the best manner she could?—We need not wonder, that Judas received from Christ so severe a rebuke: "Let her alone: *Against the day of my burying* hath she kept this." The last remark must have been terribly cutting to Judas, as he must have been conscious that he was then purposing to accomplish the destruction of his Lord and Master.

The effect produced by this miracle on the minds of many, was salutary. "Many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him." (xi. 45.) "And many also who came to the feast, when they saw Lazarus, believed on Jesus." (xii. 11.) And because of this miracle, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, *Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!*" So universally were the people moved in his favour, that the Pharisees said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after him!" Nevertheless, only a few days after, some of the populace were instigated to cry out,

“Crucify him ! Crucify him !” As to a great majority of the Pharisees, and chief priests, and rulers, they were the more hardened by this astonishing miracle, and determined to oppose the truth more violently than ever. In their conduct, we see the words of our Lord most literally verified—“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

II. We are to apply those doctrines which arise from the view taken of this history.

1. *Christ is God.*—The miracle of Lazarus’ resurrection affords undeniable evidence of the Divinity, as well as of the Messiahship of Christ. “Why,” said St. Paul to Agrippa, “should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead ?” He knew that it would be utterly incredible to attribute such an act to the power of any mere man. Elijah indeed received “the dead raised to life again” in answer to believing prayer ; but in that prayer he acknowledged his own inability to effect the miracle. “He cried unto the Lord, and said, *O Lord, my God, let, I pray thee, this child’s soul come into him again.*” Jesus addressed his Father, that the “people which stood by might believe that the Father had sent him ;” (41 ;) but he raised Lazarus by his own almighty power. He spake in a manner that became none but “the God of the spirits of all flesh ;” and thereby evidenced that “as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” He is Lord over all worlds ; spirits in hades, and bodies in the tomb, are equally subject to his controul. He knows each spirit, and the identical body to which each spirit belongs, and can

effect a re-union of body and soul in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. He wills and it is done. What a mighty Redeemer! And his grace is equal to his power. Seeing then there is nothing too hard for the Lord, can our confidence in him be too strong; or our expectations of his goodness be raised too high? He can save us to the uttermost. Our Saviour is God; and God is greater than our heart. God is mightier than our strongest corruptions, and he can so thoroughly cleanse us from all unrighteousness, that even our most easily besetting sin shall be felt within us no more. Deny it, and you deny the power of Christ; you are no longer "strong in faith, giving glory to God." How cheerfully may we commit body and soul to the keeping of such a Redeemer as unto a faithful Creator! "I know," said holy Paul, "whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." And the language of the Psalmist is no less remarkable, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." The Redeemer, the God of truth, is he on whom we are to rely for salvation, not only throughout life, but also in our dying moments. O what can a sinner do without a *divine Saviour, an atoning Saviour*, in his last hours, when the pains of death fall upon him! But with scriptural views of his eternal Godhead, and a saving faith in his entire work as Mediator, we may venture undismayed into eternity, and enter, without fear, the immediate presence of God. With what solemn, yet grateful feelings, will a dying saint repeat,

None but Christ to me be given!

None but Christ in earth or heaven!

It is an unshaken conviction of the Divinity, the essential Divinity of Christ, that inspires him with such confidence in the performance of his last act on earth. Hear him solemnly commend his departing soul to God. Does he breathe forth this prayer: "Jesus, receive my spirit!" No! That name Jesus brings neither comfort nor salvation *but as it is connected with his Deity*. He, therefore, owns that Deity with his expiring gasp, saying, "LORD Jesus, receive my Spirit." That is, Sovereign Jesus, Jehovah Jesus, God my Redeemer, receive my ransomed soul! Let us not then fear death, seeing we have such a Christ. These souls of ours come from him; he hath purchased them with his blood; he hath renewed them by his Spirit; and he has prepared for them many mansions in his Father's kingdom. Our bodies also are his workmanship; they are ransomed bodies; "the earth is the Lord's" in which they rest in dust. Let us leave our all in his hands, without one anxious or distrustful thought; and he will glorify us with himself to all eternity.

3. *We have kindred in Paradise!* What a consoling thought to those who have had parents, or children, or brethren, or sisters, that have died in the Lord! "Where are they? Do they live for ever?" Yes: They live for ever with God. By the aid of that faith which looks into the invisible world, see them before the throne of him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood! How vast their knowledge, now that the spirit is no longer confined in a prison of clay! In this life, we can hardly conceive what the vast mind of man is capable of knowing. They see the visions of God, and know as they are known! What love, mingled with the most delightful awe, overwhelms them in the pre-

sence of their Redeemer! What a fulness of joy do they find at his right hand! What blissful employment becomes their exercise day and night! "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, *Halleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!*" A brother's voice mingles with that mighty chorus; he also shouts aloud, *Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*—And shall thine eyes, O Christian, be dim with sorrow, because he is taken from thee, to inherit that glory? Or rather, not taken from thee; but taken thither *a little before thee!* Cease thy grief, at least for a season. Arise, and bow in thy closet before the Redeemer; and, adoring at his feet, join in the song of heaven, and cry, *Hallelujah!* Thou, O Jesus, "art worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." As it regards the body, we have this promise, "They shall rest in their beds." If the body knows no joy, it feels no pain; the eye-lids have forgotten to weep. He that "comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure, and who taketh up the isles as a very little thing," knows their dust, and will be at no loss to find them, when he comes to "render unto every man according to the deeds done in the body." "Thou shalt call and I will answer thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands." (Job xiv. 15.) Nor is it improbable, that death itself will be a means of leading to a more intimate knowledge of that wonderful union which subsists between body and soul, than we should have ever attained to, had man continued immortal: Just as a piece of curious mechanism is more fully understood by taking it to pieces, and examining the construction of its several parts, and the manner in which they act on each other.

3. *The dead shall all be raised in the judgment of the great day.*

In what majesty will the Son of God then appear ! He will descend from heaven, with that same body which he had when he stood at the tomb of Lazarus. But O how glorious and exalted ! He will be attended not by a few disciples, and by weeping friends ; but by all the holy angels ; and the living saints shall rejoice, that the final redemption draweth nigh ! His mighty voice shall command the dead to arise ; and then not an individual disciple merely, but “ all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth.” O that *coming forth* ! It is to receive a final, an eternal destiny :—“ They that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.”

The command is given to the attending angels, who were ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation on earth : “ Gather my saints together, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.” Here meet in one assembly the saints of every age. Here Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, behold each other, and joy to know that they shall “ die no more.” Here Abraham finds a Sarah,—“ his dead whom he had buried out of his sight ;” and Job, his children, whom “ the Lord had taken away ;” and the “ devout men” of the early Christian church, that same Stephen, whom they had carried to his burial, “ making lamentation over him.” And there we shall meet our blessed dead ; and we with them shall behold our common Redeemer with unutterable joy when “ he comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” Let us then be found ready, and waiting for the appearing of our Lord. Let the decease of every Christian friend cause us, with renewed diligence, “ to gird up the loins of our mind,

to be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

SERMON XI.

O N H U M I L I T Y.

Be clothed with Humility.—1 PETER v. 5.

EVERY perversion of religion which has proceeded from the invention of man, has a direct tendency to nourish pride, and to exalt him in his own estimation. Yet in this we see the folly of human wisdom, inasmuch as it contains within itself the principles of its own destruction: For pride is in reality the degradation of man; and every departure from the truth, either in theory or practice, only ends in deeper debasement of spirit. But religion, as it came from God, whether given to man in Paradise, or since the fall, is calculated to promote humility, and to abase him in the presence of his Maker. It leads through the valley of humility to the loftiest heights of exaltation; for it causes even sinful man to become a saint on earth, and then lifts him up to the throne of God.

If to promote Humility be the design of all revealed religion, we may reasonably expect to find that end kept in view, in the last and most perfect dispensation of mercy given to the world. Humility is the distinguishing feature of Christianity. "Learn of me," says Christ; and then *he only prescribes one lesson for us to learn:—*

“I am meek and lowly in heart.” Herein consists the proper study of Christianity; and he best understands its nature, who drinks deepest into its spirit, and who possesses, in the greatest perfection, “genuine meek humility.”

To assist you in your endeavours to become Christians of a higher order, I shall attempt

I. To explain what Humility is;

II. Point out the singular excellency of this grace;
And,

III. Shew the best means of preserving it, and of increasing in it.

I. THE NATURE OF HUMILITY.

There are three different views to be taken of this Christian grace, according to which it may be variously defined. If we speak of it *in reference to God*, Humility is a deep conviction of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and of our absolute dependance on his grace for every thing that is good. If *in reference to ourselves*, Humility is a lowly estimation of our own character, attainments, and performances. If *in reference to our fellow-creatures*, Humility is that disposition of mind which places us at the feet of the least disciple of our Lord, and that makes us willing, for the sake of Christ, to be the servant of all men.

1. *Humility in relation to God.*

It is a deep conviction of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and of our absolute dependance on his grace for every thing that is good.

There can be no Humility without a manifestation of God. When a sinner is truly awakened, though God has not, as yet, shined into his heart, so as to give him

the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; yet has he impressed the mind with an awful sense of his majesty, and power, and holiness, and justice, which, joined with a consciousness of guilt, makes him "poor and contrite," and causes him to "tremble at the word of the Lord." But when Jehovah manifests himself as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," the pardoned penitent is humbled still more deeply, than in his awakened state. He is then especially filled with holy shame, and from the ground of his heart adopts the language of the apostle, "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but *according to his mercy* he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, *through Jesus Christ our Saviour*; that *being justified by his grace*, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus iii. 5—7.) "By the grace of God, I am what I am."

As he increases in grace, he increases in Humility. This is a consequence of deeper communion with God. Every manifestation of Jehovah, his Father and Friend, his All in All, abases him as in the dust. Nor can he retire from his closet, where he has conversed with his Maker, without carrying into the world such a sense of his own undeservings and unworthiness, as shall constrain him with a most delightful and pleasing constraint, to a lowly and affectionate carriage and deportment in all his converse with men.

But the Christian is never thoroughly "clothed with Humility," till "his day of Pentecost is fully come." When he is "cleansed from all unrighteousness," and made "perfect in love;"—when he is "sanctified wholly,

throughout spirit, and soul, and body," and becomes "unblameable in holiness" before God, even our Father, through being "filled with the Holy Ghost;"—then is he purified from pride, and truly possesses that humble "mind that was in Christ Jesus." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" and, seeing God, they are much more abased in spirit, than if they saw nothing but their own corruptions. Hence it is that, in all ages of the world, the most eminent saints have been the most humble; as Abraham, Job, Isaiah, Paul, and others; not surely because they really had a small degree of grace, but because "all grace was made to abound towards them." He is "clothed with Humility" who has so "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;" but who, on the contrary, "has escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, being made a partaker of the divine nature," by the mighty power of God. Christian perfection is the perfection of Humility. Nothing so much humbles the soul as the "perfect love of God." If the Christian be called unto holiness, it is perfect love that enables him to "walk worthy of that vocation, *with all lowliness and meekness:*" And if the end of the Christian ministry be "the perfecting of the saints," that end is answered when "the new man is put on, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is then that the believer has a constant and penetrating conviction of his *original depravity*; of his numerous actual transgressions before he was brought to the knowledge of the truth; of the strength of his corruptions, and their manifold workings in the heart, until Jesus Christ had made him whole of whatsoever disease he had; of his infinite obligations to the rich,

free, and unmerited grace of God ; and of his constant momentary dependance on that grace for a continuance and increase of the life of God in the soul. Of all these things he has a much deeper and more lively conviction, than he who is yet comparatively “carnal, and but a babe in Christ.” He feels that “without Christ he can do nothing ;” and that he constantly needs his grace, to enable him to resist temptation, and to “keep him from falling, that he may be presented faultless before the throne of the divine glory with exceeding joy.” Nor can the desire of his heart be better expressed than in these lines of a Christian poet :

Still let me gain perfection's height,
 Still let me into nothing fall,
 As less than nothing in thy sight,
 And feel that Christ is All in All.

Here is the Humility of saints ; in this manner, without sinning, do they “walk humbly with God.” The Holy Ghost dwells in them ; he keeps them humble, without the help of their own corruptions. All the discoveries which God makes to the soul, are humbling. Now his light makes the clearest discoveries, when its lustre is not clouded by the darkness of sin. And he that is most humble in the presence of God, will be the least in his own estimation. Hence we may take another view of this Christian grace, and consider

2. *Humility in reference to ourselves.*

It is a lowly estimation of our own character, attainments, and performances.

It is certain, however, that he who possesses genuine Humility, knows what his real character is, and it is no part of Humility to deny that character : For that would

be to deny the grace of God that is in him ; or at least, to “receive that grace in vain.” It is his duty, on all proper occasions, to “declare what God hath done for his soul ;” not that he may magnify himself, but that others may glorify God in him. The employment of eternity ought to begin in time. He who would hereafter, in the heavenly world, where all boasting will be for ever excluded, declare the loving-kindness of the Lord, must take up his cross, if it prove one, by “shewing forth the salvation of Jehovah from day to day” while he dwells upon earth. If he have been saved to the uttermost, let him, before those who are seeking the same blessing, with his mouth make confession of it, and not hide the righteousness of God within his heart. There is no pride in owning, that God is faithful and just in fulfilling all his promises, and in declaring with Joshua, “Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God spake concerning us ; all are come to pass unto us, not one thing hath failed thereof.” But he has reason to fear the existence of pride, who is ashamed of the reproach he might have to encounter, were he to “set to his seal that God is true.”

When St. Paul acknowledged concerning himself, that he was the chief of sinners, he referred more especially to his character and conduct before his conversion, when he was “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.” He could not, in an absolute and unqualified sense, regard himself as the chief of sinners when he had been made a saint by the mercy of God ; as he testifies in another place, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” The

Christian then knows, that he is a saint ; but, knowing himself better than he can possibly know another, and comparing his holiness and enjoyments with his privileges, he conceives himself to be “less than the least of all:” This is the habitual estimation that he forms of his own character. Yea, the more he possesses, the more lowly he becomes ; Humility always *preceding* and *accompanying* a deeper work of grace in the heart.

A humble man never over-rates his talents. Great gifts are indeed very dangerous, without great grace ; so that where piety is not deep, it is a great mercy to be blest with only slender abilities. The danger arising from the possession of more than ordinary talents, is oftentimes vastly increased by the injudicious commendations of Christian friends, who are too apt foolishly and sinfully to idolize the creature, instead of giving unto God the glory due unto his name. But he who is truly humble never fancies, that he possesses any excellence or talent of which he is entirely destitute ; for he is sensible that such a conceit is the highest pitch of pride. Hence he knows his station in life, or in the church of God, and never attempts any thing beyond his power ; but, directing all his energies, and putting forth all his strength, in his own proper work, he employs his talents in it in such a manner as to ensure the Redeemer’s approbation. Of those talents which he really possesses, he “vaunteth not himself,” since he is only concerned rightly *to use*, and constantly to *improve* them, and has no desire to make a show of them to the world. He covets not the praises of mankind ; and, as to the children of God, he would rather merit than receive their commendations. It is in this manner that he exemplifies the truth of these lines,

The Christian he alone is wise,
The Christian he alone is great.

The possession of Humility keeps his mind always even ; for it preserves him from a thousand mortifications to which the vain and little-minded are exposed every day. He that has but a small measure of Humility will “ think of himself more highly than he ought to think,” and be ready to take offence whenever men do not, in his judgment, sufficiently estimate his parts or his piety. If he be not respected as he desires, his anger will kindle into a flame. But he who is rooted in Humility, “ will think soberly according as God hath dealt unto him the measure of faith.” He will not, of course, be ignorant of “ the measure,” or degree of gifts he has received ; for, without a knowledge of their nature and extent, he could not improve them : But that knowledge will ever be accompanied with such a consciousness of his own inability to employ them aright, and of the awful responsibility that lies upon him, as will make him tremble, lest he should meet at last the punishment of a slothful and unprofitable servant. These recollections, joined with a remembrance of many instances of unfaithfulness, make even his gifts a great means of promoting Humility in his soul before God.

As the Christian forms a lowly estimation of his character and attainments, so also does he think soberly with regard to his performances. It is true, that nearly all the good that is done in the world, is done by Christians. It is their example, and their agency, their influence and their arguments, that put in motion the great mass of mankind amongst whom they live, to accomplish those benevolent purposes which Christianity itself inspires. A Christian must do good ; his prin-

ciples, so long as they have a hold upon the heart, will be operative, constraining him to exert himself, according to his sphere in life and his circumstances, to promote the glory of Christ. This is the very end for which he lives. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain." But, in the midst of his zeal, and prayers, and charities, the Christian recollects that it is written, "When ye have done all, say, *We are unprofitable servants.*" He judges of his performances, not from the opinions of men, but from the extent of his duty, and from the infinite and eternal obligations he owes to the Redeemer. Hence it is that all his deeds appear small, and unworthy of notice; nor can he forbear to admire the riches of the grace of God; according to which, his works will, in honour of the principle from whence they proceed, receive a righteous reward from the Judge of all in the last day. His performances, therefore, associated with scriptural views of their rewardableness, are so far from ministering to pride, that they contribute to his abasement on earth; as, when he receives that "full reward," he will be eternally humbled before the throne of God.

3. We are to take a third view of humility, and to consider it *in regard to our fellow-creatures.*

It is that disposition of mind which places us at the feet of the least disciple of our Lord, and makes us willing, for the sake of Christ, to be the servants of all men.

A humble man is not blind to those excellencies which others possess; neither is he envious of them, or of the favour that they may procure: But he rejoices in them

with exceeding joy, and makes the felicity of others a means of augmenting his own happiness. While he loves with "a pure heart fervently" his fellow Christian, because he is a Christian, he especially esteems him on account of those distinguishing virtues that may be most conspicuous in his character or conduct. Envy is gone where humility reigns. Envy only exists where there is ambition. He that envies another any adventitious superiority, however he may disguise the vice, is only ambitious to encircle his own brow with the wreath which adorns that of his neighbour. But humility loves to honour and is ashamed of being honoured. "In lowliness of mind," says the apostle, "let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Here is the conduct of a Christian,—he "looks not on his own things" with any sinful complacency: But on "the things of others," their good works, or words, or purposes, he looks with unmingled pleasure; and sincerely blesses God, if others become more wise and holy, and are made more honourable and useful than he.

Humility places us at the feet of all. Not indeed that it confounds all order and distinction in the church of Christ, making the hand the foot, and the eye the ear; but it well regulates the whole body, teaching the hand not to despise the services of the foot, and the eye not to refuse the advantages of that instruction that may be conveyed by the ear. Ministers may learn much from their people; and fathers in Christ may often receive an useful hint from those who are only babes. Jesus Christ once taught all his disciples by the example of a little child: And the venerable Wesley has left us this

remark relative to his own conduct : " I say unto God and man, *What I know not, teach thou me.*" By him that is truly humble, instruction will be thankfully received as coming from God, whether the instrument employed to convey it be a philosopher or a babe. Indeed God oftentimes chooses to instruct the wiser by the less wise, that with growing knowledge they may increase in Humility, when the comparatively foolish become their teachers. But he that is above learning, even from an almost idiot, has need to begin over again with the elements of Christianity.

If Humility reigned as it ought in every Christian's heart, there would not be found amongst them any criticising hearers of the word of God. " With meekness," says the apostle, " receive ye the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Were we possessed of that eminent grace, meekness, every one would be a *learner*, not a *judge*, on the Sabbath day ; and no one would hear a sermon, whosoever might be the minister, without increasing in wisdom, or in piety. The celebrated Mr. Grimshaw, after hearing one of our early itinerant ministers deliver a discourse in the kitchen of his parsonage house, at Howarth, fell at his feet, saying : " The Lord bless thee, Jerry ! One of thy sermons is worth twenty of mine." O if the pert critics of our day, who are accustomed to offer " remarks" on every sermon they hear, had but the shadow of a Grimshaw's solid and substantial piety, how would they set themselves to practise instead of despising what they hear, and thus avoid the curse of " coming as God's people come," without being converted and saved ! He that reproaches a servant of Christ, who has spoken " as the oracles of God," because his manner or turn of expression was not just according

to his fancy, *reproaches his Master who sent him*; and Christ will put it to his own account, and perhaps judicially punish that man, by preventing him from receiving any real good, though he may be very much gratified when a more pleasing preacher shall address his "itching ears." If Humility require, that we place ourselves at the feet of the simplest believer, shall we so far forget the Christian character, as to judge him who comes invested with the most awful authority as an ambassador for Christ? Or rather I would say, shall we give such sad evidence that we are destitute of Christianity, because Humility we have none? Woe be to you that judge the preachers of God's word, instead of being by their doctrines nourished up in faith and holiness! Woe be to you, for God himself shall judge you with a tremendous judgment, when you appear at his tribunal! To avoid that final condemnation, let me charge you all, to take heed *how* you hear! Take heed to your prejudices before you hear, and to your spirit while hearing, and to your conduct after you have heard: Or to sum up all exhortations in one, take heed that ye be "clothed with Humility."

No offices of kindness, if indispensably necessary, are accounted, by a humble man, too low and mean to perform, towards any disciple of his Lord. *Washing of feet* was anciently a duty performed by slaves towards the guests of their master. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on one memorable occasion, after he had partaken of a supper with his disciples, arose, and himself performed the service of a slave to them. The evangelist has introduced this part of his history with words that do strikingly set forth the dignity of our Saviour, and thereby make the contrast of his humiliation the more

impressive : “*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God ; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments ; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*” When our Lord came to Peter, that disciple was so astonished at the apparent degradation of the office which the Saviour had undertaken, that he said, “Lord, dost thou wash my feet ?” And afterwards with vehemence, “Thou shalt never wash my feet !” But when he had submitted, our Lord informed his disciples, at the close, the moral lesson of that action. “Know ye,” said he, “what I have done to you ? Ye call me MASTER and LORD : And ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” (John xvii. 3—16.) Now though our customs, differing as they do from those of eastern countries, render an imitation of Christ in this particular act unnecessary ; yet in every practicable case, we are to conform, in the most cheerful and unaffected manner to the spirit of his example. Nothing is beneath a Christian but sin. If angels attend upon a dying Lazarus, and wait to convey his departing spirit to Paradise, shall a fellow disciple think it any great condescension to dress his wounds ; or to sustain his head in his expiring moments ; or to follow him, in an honourable manner, to an obscure grave or tomb ? Let none then, who are called Christians, be ashamed of Christ’s poor ; but let us honour and love them ; and, in reference to them especially, let us ever feel

All other joys are less,
Than the one joy of doing kindnesses.

Lastly : Of Humility we observe, that it is the most retiring of all the graces of the Spirit of God. It shuns human observation, yet is it of all graces unavoidably the most conspicuous, when possessed in an eminent degree. It is, like an outer garment, always in view. This thought is suggested by the expression of the apostle, "Be *clothed* with Humility : " Be constantly ready to the prompt performance of the lowest offices of kindness and benevolence ; and yet be, as it were, unconscious of your Humility ; esteem kindness, when you perform it, a privilege to yourself, more than as an act of condescension. And let not pride mingle with an humble outward action, and render it odious in the eyes of God, while it may command the esteem and applause of man. A servant is never proud of wearing that garment which is the badge of his servitude.

Having thus explained at large what Humility is, let us proceed to consider, **SECONDLY,**

II. THE SINGULAR EXCELLENCY OF THIS CHRISTIAN GRACE.

Humility is the grace which shone forth most conspicuously throughout the life of our Redeemer. The very act of his taking our nature upon him, was in itself an astonishing display of the greatest condescension. It was riches united to poverty, strength to weakness, happiness to misery. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh ;" "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh." Words are lost in attempting to explain this subject ; and the mind itself is overwhelmed with its greatness, in endeavouring to compre-

hend it. The humiliation of Christ will furnish matter for the everlasting admiration and gratitude of all pure and intelligent spirits ; and especially of redeemed and saved man.

How wonderful were all the circumstances that attended our Saviour's incarnation ! His birth was not announced by angels to the great Sanhedrim of the Jews, nor to the wise and learned, and powerful of the Jewish nation, nor to the citizens of populous Jerusalem, nor yet to any favoured prophets raised to eminence before his coming, that they might usher in his appearance with splendour and glory ; but it was made known to "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." No prodigies attended his birth in Judea, save the hymning of the heavenly host :— "GLORY to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE, GOOD-WILL toward men !" Yet that it might be seen that he was the God of the Gentiles, as well as the God of the Jews, a star was appointed to guide the Eastern Magi to Jerusalem ; and the first offering that the Messiah received was, the "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh," which *Gentile* worshippers presented at his feet. "To him was given of the gold of Sheba ;" and then commenced the fulfilment of that prophecy, "prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised." (Psalm lxxii. 15.)

What a sight was it to the shepherd Jews, and to the wise men of the East, to behold him whom angels adored, and whom the luminous star pointed out as Lord of the visible creation, as "the babe lying in a manger !" The Son of God thus became man in the most helpless stage of humanity, that he might sanctify every state of human life, from infancy up to ripe manhood.—He passed

through infancy, that parents might be encouraged to dedicate their babes to him, and that they might not be without consolation when they are snatched away in the early morning of their existence. He who was once a babe in Bethlehem, receives, through the blood of atonement, the spirit of every dying infant,—whether of Pagan, or Mahommedan, or Jewish, or of Christian descent,—to his own eternal kingdom. But who, that only looked at outward things, would have conceived that he, who lay in a manger, was the Redeemer of the world? Here was no pomp, no state, no greatness; but what a lesson of Humility to all Christians throughout all ages!

In his life we behold a continual example of Humility. His wisdom was infinite. He was “in the bosom of the Father”—intimately and perfectly acquainted with all his counsels,—and he had received the Spirit “without measure.” Yet when he opened his mouth to preach the gospel of the kingdom, he did not in a pompous manner deliver new laws; but he expounded and applied Moses and the prophets, though with an authority peculiarly his own. The manner in which he fulfilled his ministry was mild and unoffensive, and at the remotest distance from ostentation. “He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.” (Matt. xii. 19.) His miracles were great; but he never wrought a single miracle purely for the display of his own power. Many of his mightiest miracles were performed in comparative obscurity. He stilled the raging of the sea by his word, in the darkness of night; he twice miraculously fed many thousands in a desert; and he raised Lazarus from the dead at the small town of Bethany. In all the instructions he gave his disci-

ples in private, and in all his conduct towards them, from the day that they first followed him till his removal from them, he was continually teaching them the importance of Humility.

See Jesus in his sufferings and death ! To what indignities, and reproaches, and scourgings, and buffetings ; and to what a shameful mockery of trial did he submit, at the bar of Pilate, and in the presence of Caiaphas, the high priest, and before haughty Herod ! Herod hoped to have seen some miracle done by him ; but Jesus wrought none. Herod “questioned with him in many words ; but Jesus answered him nothing.” He is crucified between thieves and murderers, and in his agony his foes insult him with the cry—“He saved others, himself he cannot save.” Of all the reproaches which Christ endured, none were so keen and bitter as those taunts that were drawn from his own acknowledged miracles. The credit of that character which he had obtained in Judea by his mighty deeds, seemed to be at stake ; those deeds themselves, to which he had been accustomed to appeal in his ministry, saying,—“Believe me for my work’s sake”—were now produced as so many arguments against his being the true Messiah ! When the populace who had seen his wonderful works, heard “the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders” join in the taunting and insulting declaration—“He saved others, himself he cannot save !” would they not be naturally led to conclude, “That saying of our wise men is true, or surely he would save himself, and thereby give the demanded evidence of his being the Son of God ?” Nothing but the prodigies that followed,—the darkness, the earthquake, and the rending of the vail,—could arrest the progress of such unbelieving reasonings.

Even Christ's own disciples began to doubt, when they saw his end. But he "endured the cross, despising the shame." He never once opened his mouth to proclaim his innocence, nor sought to check their insulting blasphemies with a prediction of his future resurrection and glory; but, in the greatness of his Humility, he submitted to be "laughed to scorn;" to be contemned as "a worm and no man;" and to be "a reproach of men, and despised of the people." Herein he became our example, that we might learn with Humility and patience to bear all the wrongs of ungodly men, and suffer no taunts, no scorning of the proud, nor even the faithlessness of feeble brethren, to provoke us to speak unadvisedly with our lips.

When Christ had dismissed his Spirit, the work of atonement was finished. The salvation of man would have been secured, had Jesus Christ shaken the earth to its centre; and, in the presence of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, revived from the cross, entered their city, and confounded those who condemned him, and from their tribunal ascended triumphantly to glory. But he chose to be humbled still more: He lay in the grave as under the arrest of death, that he might carry immortality into the tomb. And when he arose, none were eye-witnesses at the moment of his coming forth, except perhaps the guards who were appointed to watch his burial. He afterwards manifested himself to none but his own disciples: And when he ascended in their sight, no visible grandeur attended that amazing triumph of "the King of glory;" but having "led them out as far as Bethany, and lifted up his hands and blessed them; it came to pass," while in that gracious act of blessing them, "he was parted from them, and

carried up into heaven." (Luke xxiv. 50—53.) They "beheld when he was taken up, until a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts i. 9.)

What an impressive history is the history of the Son of God! His every word, his every act;—his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension,—all seem to cry in our ears, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." He doth not teach us to be warriors, nor to be philosophers, nor to be statesmen, nor to be orators; but every where he teaches us to be *humble men*. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 25—28.) What an excellent grace is Humility! It is the glory of Christianity; and all the splendour of the Mosaic system hath no longer any glory, by reason of this "glory that excelleth."

2. As it is Humility that forms the Christian character, so is it by preserving Humility that the Christian is kept from falling, and saved unto the end. "Thou standest by faith," says the apostle Paul; "be not high-minded, but fear." Fear lest thou shouldest fall; lest thou shouldest be broken off from Christ; and, instead of being restored at last by absolute necessity, shouldst be made an example of the just severity of God. "Take heed lest he also spare not thee." It is the very height of presumption in a pardoned believer, to suppose, in the first place, that God cannot cleanse him from all sin in this life, but that the carnal mind must remain as

long as he dwells upon earth ; and then to imagine, that God cannot, or will not, condemn him eternally, if, through the power of those corruptions he has so strongly pleaded for, he fall into actual sin ! If grace did not mightily work in the heart, to the counteracting of the naturally dangerous tendency of such pernicious principles, they would be the utter undoing of all who embrace them. How singularly strange that any of our Christian brethren should believe, that all who are born of God are as absolutely secure from finally falling away, as the saints and angels *whose probation is past!*, while they will not allow it to be possible so far to resemble them in purity, as to “do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven.” *Their perfection* does indeed greatly exceed any thing unto which *we* can hope to attain on this side of eternity. Error however is always full of inconsistencies.

If you would continue humble, avoid such conceits ; they neither come from the word of God, nor are they in accordance with those holy fears and that godly jealousy you feel, when by the Spirit of God you are quickened to “give diligence, to make your calling and election sure.” As theory influences practice, take your stand on low ground as the safest, ever remembering that a godly fear *of* falling, is the best preservative *from* falling, and the only scriptural method of obtaining the end of your faith,—the final salvation of the soul. It is a rare thing, to meet with a backslider who has not been previously under the influence of pride ; while in those who continue to walk humbly with God, we see the great promise fulfilled, “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit

before a fall :” But God “raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and setteth them among princes, to make them inherit the throne of glory.”

3. Humility qualifies the Christian for extensive usefulness in the church of God. This remark is suggested by the connection in which our text is found. The apostle had been addressing the elders or rulers of the church ; and them he exhorts not to be “lords over God’s heritage, but to be ensamples to the flock ;” that is, ensamples of Humility. He would have them to consider that the only dignity needful for them, in their elevated office, consisted in exemplifying a superior degree of meekness and lowliness of mind. Meekness is the true dignity of a Christian minister, whether bishop or pastor,—for this plain reason, because no other dignity was required or possessed by Jesus Christ. But, next, the apostle addresses those who were younger : “Likewise, ye younger” ministers, who may be like Timothy or Titus, “submit yourselves unto the elder,”—to those whose age and experience qualify them to act as *superintendants* of the church, to maintain discipline and Christian order. “Yea, all of you,” private Christians as well as pastors, “be subject to one another, and be clothed with Humility” as indispensably necessary to that required mutual subjection which becometh saints. Now where Humility thus reigns throughout a Christian society, “the multitude of them that believe will be of one heart and of one soul.” And those amongst them, whom the Great Shepherd entrusts with talents of various kinds, may be safely employed, and regularly trained for public usefulness, as the providence of God may open the way. God never designs to employ, in his service, a novice who is lifted up with

pride; but he will put honour upon him who is clothed with Humility; and whether he be a private Christian or hold any office in the church of Christ, he shall live to bless the world.

4. Humility endears man to his Maker. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.) God has one favourite habitation. His chosen, his much-loved abode is the heart of the lowly. Of such an one he declares, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell; for I have desired it." The Father and the Son will love him, and will come unto him, and make their abode with him. The sighs and groans of the humble will be no less grateful unto him, than the loftiest praises of angels and archangels, who "laud and magnify his holy name." God will impart unto him larger communications of grace, and bless him with brighter manifestations of his presence, and a deeper baptism of his Spirit, and a fuller enjoyment of that "perfect love, that casteth out fear." He will supply all his need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He will give him grace according to his day; consoling him in affliction, succouring him in temptation, strengthening him in weakness, and bringing him off more than conqueror. The humble shall dwell for ever in the presence of God.

Seeing then that Christian Humility is such a singularly excellent grace, and that the possession of it is of

such deep importance, it cannot be unprofitable in conclusion to shew,

III. THE BEST MEANS OF PRESERVING IT, AND OF INCREASING IN IT.

1. Know yourselves. Pride is the offspring of ignorance. Yet you cannot more deeply offend a proud man, than by establishing that truth in reference to himself,—by pointing out his own ignorance to him. But Humility springs from wisdom, and is found where-soever there is a correct and sound understanding. It is the result of the best kind of knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves. If you wish then to preserve and increase in Humility, keep your eye upon your own heart, and you will make wonderful discoveries. Look within yourselves; look through yourselves. By the grace of God, acquire the habit of examining every temper and motive as it arises and influences the mind; and then what is wrong will be soon corrected, or what would be wrong will be prevented without much difficulty. Watch yourselves with the same vigilance that you would watch an enemy; and with the same suspicion that a jealous person watches his neighbour. Watch always; for you will never know your own heart by a hasty and occasional glance; it is only by a close and keen inspection that you will thoroughly obtain this knowledge. The light and influence of the Holy Spirit will, of course, be always needed; for “without him you can do nothing.” But being led by him, you shall be enabled daily to take up this cross of habitual self-examination, till you discover the depths of inbred sin, and are brought unto him whose blood can make the unholy sinner pure. And, after your eyes have seen this

great salvation, by steadfast watchfulness you will perceive so many weaknesses and infirmities, as will daily prove a source of humiliation, and convince you more deeply of your utter nothingness, and that *Christ is all in all*.

2. Know your station in the church of God. "Lord," says David, "my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." (Psalm cxxxiii. 1.) Every one that truly knows himself, will in this matter imitate the excellent example of David; he will abide in his proper station, and never attempt to meddle with things that are beyond his reach. He will not become, to use the expression of St. John, a *prating* Diotrophes, "a man full of words, loving to have the pre-eminence;" but he will think it an honour of which he is not worthy to be even "a door-keeper in the house of God." God has so variously and so suitably dispensed his gifts to the several members of the church universal,—and the same remark may be applied to many individual churches,—that there would be no lack of wisdom or efficiency for any useful purpose, if only every one "knew his calling, and would therein abide." But when any member removes from his proper station, it sometimes requires the united wisdom and care of all the rest to keep him from doing mischief; instead of combining and employing all their energies in the sole work of enlarging the kingdom of the Redeemer amongst the sons of men. Every one who gets out of his appointed sphere of action, is open to numerous temptations to pride: While he who only doeth that which his heavenly Father hath ordained, is

As safe from danger, as from fear,
Since love, Almighty love, is near.

3. Would you preserve and increase Humility of heart, never allow of self-complacency. A vain thought, indulged for a moment, may lead to an eternity of woe. "I hate vain thoughts," saith the Psalmist, "but thy law do I love." On various occasions, the adversary of souls will suggest numerous thoughts to the mind, that would, if encouraged, introduce or minister to pride. When he can no otherwise overcome, he will endeavour to make the grace, which has been received, a means of effecting the ruin of the soul, by promoting secret vanity of mind, which he knows full well will immediately grieve the Spirit of God. Of how much importance then is it to reject every thought that would lead to boasting, the instant it is presented; and to be always careful to "ascribe unto God the glory due unto his name!" Sincerely and cheerfully acknowledge, that, whatever good you possess, or are the instrument of doing, the sole glory belongs to the great and ever-blessed Jehovah. "Yet not I," said Paul, "but the grace of God that was in me." Ever feel a deep conviction of that truth, and you are safe and happy.

4. When your soul is most happy in God, and enjoys most of the divine presence, then is the season to draw a three-fold comparison, with a view to your increasing Humility :

(1.) Compare your very best state and actions with your vast and extensive privileges. Turn to the epistles of St. Paul, and to the first epistle of St. John, and see what it is to be a Christian. He who lives up to his privileges, enjoys all that is promised in the deepest portions of holy writ, and obeys all that is commanded in the gospel of God our Saviour. Consider what peculiar advantages you have been favoured with, for a long

series of years. It is not one of the least, that you have had your privileges exhibited in a clear manner, by those who have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. "The whole counsel of God," as it relates to believers, has been declared unto you; and you have been continually exhorted to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Compare then what you *are*, with what *you might have been* had you always been faithful; and you will not fail to be humbled, even on the mount, where you may have the most favoured views of the glory of the Son of God.

(2.) Compare yourselves at such a season with those who, without enjoying greater advantages, have far exceeded you in piety and usefulness. What a list of worthies may be here called to remembrance! A Fletcher, a Walsh, a Brainerd, a Pearce, a Bramwell; and of devout women, a Bosanquet, a Rogers, a Cooper. Recollect how they lived, and loved, and laboured, and prayed, and died. Are you more holy, and fervent, and devout than they? Do you, by waiting upon the Lord, in a more vigorous manner than they were wont to do, "mount up with wings as eagles;" and with greater alacrity, "run without weariness;" and with greater energy, "press forwards without fainting?" Or, instead of rising higher on the wings of faith and love, do your *soarings* scarcely reach their *sinkings*?—It is then too soon for you to be high-minded. Wait till you get more grace, before you venture so much as to lift up your mouth from the dust, either in the presence of God, or of his people amongst whom you dwell. Yea, peradventure, without having recourse to those saints "who being dead, yet speak" unto us, in the records of

their lives, you know some in the same Society with yourselves, who have commenced their Christian career much later than you, and yet you see, (are you not inwardly ashamed on account of your own lukewarmness and unprofitableness?) that they are now holier and happier and more useful Christians than you.

(3.) Compare your best with your worst state. It is deeply to be lamented, that the general unfaithfulness of Christians makes such a comparison possible. O when shall the day come, when the word *unfaithful* shall be unknown in its application to the Christian character? But since it is so commonly met with in the present state of the church, it may be well to improve, as far as we can, such a deplorable evil, by shewing that, on account of it, there ought to be great humblings of soul. Recollect then, when you have any special joyous manifestation of God to the heart, what a poor unprofitable creature you have been! What coldness has sometimes chilled your spirit! How wanting in fervour your devotions! Of how many backslidings in heart God has been a witness! What opportunities of usefulness you have missed; or only improved in a partial manner! Compare the present with the past; and instead of being lifted up because of what you now receive, you will be overwhelmed with shame, and at a loss how sufficiently to adore the riches of the grace of God.

These comparisons will be especially profitable in your most joyous and happy hours. Yet will it be needful to guard against discouragement of mind; always remembering, that, whatever may have been your conduct hitherto,

*Now you may give your wandrings o'er,
By giving God your heart.*

5. Invariably humble the soul before God, for every failing of which you may be conscious. It is not enough that you perceive an error, whether of judgment, which may be the case with the holiest of saints; or of temper and conduct, which may happen to those who are not delivered from the carnal mind; you ought invariably to confess that error, or that sin, in secret upon your knees before God. And if you have, by any mistake or sin, wronged or injured your fellow-creatures, it is your bounden duty to acknowledge it to them also, and to ask their forgiveness, while you endeavour to make all the reparation that is in your power. "God," says Brainerd, "has given me that disposition, that if a man had done me a *hundred* injuries, and I, *though ever so much provoked to it*, have done him *one*, I feel disposed, and heartily willing, humbly to confess my fault to him, and on my knees to ask forgiveness of him, though, at the same time, he should justify himself in all the injuries he has done me, and should only make use of my humble confession to blacken my character the more, and represent me as the only person guilty; yea, though he should, as it were, insult me, and say, he knew all this before, and that I was making work for repentance."—An erring judgment only, while the heart enjoys "perfect love," is a source of very deep humiliation, though it brings no guilt; because it shews how deeply man is fallen, and how awfully his faculties are impaired, so that even Christianity, glorious as it is, cannot restore his understanding to that perfection and vigour it originally had, when he came from the hands of God. If then, besides humbling yourself before men when that is a duty, you never enter your closet, without acknowledging every failing or transgression, that you can re-

member to have occurred since the last hour you were there waiting upon God, you will never leave that hallowed place without an increase of humility, as well as an increase of wisdom and grace, to preserve you from any similar evil in your future intercourse with mankind.

Get deeper piety. "The highest flames," says Bishop Taylor, "are the most tremulous; and so the most holy and eminent religious persons are more full of awfulness, and fear, and modesty, and Humility." On this ground it appears, that saints will be more humble in heaven than they are on earth; because they will then be much nearer to God, and have a *higher degree* of perfection than can be attained in the present state. The "perfect love" which they have on earth, shall be vastly increased in heaven; hence they will feel more delightful abasement of spirit, though not accompanied with any painful recollections, before the throne of glory, than they ever experience now in their deepest humblings before the throne of grace. Follow, therefore, holiness; seek earnestly for purity of heart. "Ask, and ye shall receive" the gift of the Holy Ghost; and as it is "his good pleasure" that you should "be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect," he will "work in you all that good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power." Be holy, and obedient; and you will be far less in danger of pride, and will increase abundantly more in Humility, than if you followed Christ at a distance, and proved unfaithful to his grace. The *holiest is the humblest saint*; therefore, he who has the largest share of purity on earth, shall be the highest exalted in Heaven, and be the nearest to the Redeemer's throne in glory for evermore.

SERMON XII.

HOPE FOR THE PENITENT.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance; let us plead together; and declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.—
ISAIAH xliiii. 25, 26.

THESE words are addressed to penitent sinners, who are mourning before God on account of their transgressions. To all such characters I joy to bring this morning a message of mercy and peace. "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is now rising upon thee." Let the broken in heart wait for the consolation of Israel, full of believing expectation, knowing that "the Lord, whom they seek, will come suddenly to his temple." Let them "that tremble at the word of the Lord," hear his word, in the spirit of prayer, nothing doubting but that this is the hour in which God will speak peace to their souls. The text itself will warrant such an expectation: And let them also remember, that the Christian Sabbath is especially "the day which the Lord hath made" for the manifestation of his mercy, through Him "who died for our offences, and was raised again for our Justification." Could we behold at one view the wonders of

grace that will this day be displayed throughout the whole Christian church, we should see, that, in the various parts of the earth, some hundreds of sinners will be justified through faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And why then should not pardon come to the guilty *in this congregation*? Is there no mercy for the Manassehs, and the Magdalenes, and the Sauls amongst us? Yea, the Lord God waiteth now to be gracious, and is exalted to magnify his pardoning love. “Behold! now is the accepted time: Behold! now is the day of salvation.”

Listen then, O mourners in Zion,

- I. To a declaration of your sins and deserts;
- II. To the proclamation of a free and full forgiveness; and
- III. To the invitation urging you to accept the proffered mercy.

I. I am to publish a declaration of your sins and deserts.

The words immediately preceding the promise in the text are these:—“Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.” What a heavy charge was this, preferred by the Most High against his ancient people the Jews; the people whom “he had formed for himself, that they might shew forth his praise!” And are you not conscious, that this affecting charge contains but too just a representation of your conduct? It is then highly fitting, that you should repent; it becomes you to feel poverty of spirit: And that you may be thoroughly sensible how greatly you have “sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” before I apply the

promise of pardon, I shall lead you to an investigation of your whole life, that your sins may be set in order before your eyes.

1. You are a sinner by nature. "Sinner" is your name, and sin your natural inheritance. "Behold," says the Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Soon as you had an existence, you had a principle in the heart which was enmity against that Divine Being to whom you were indebted for that existence. You no sooner breathed God's air, than you were God's enemy. That principle of evil is called, by the holy and inspired apostle Paul, "a carnal *mind*;"—not merely a carnal understanding, or a carnal will, or carnal affections;—but a carnal *mind*, intimating that *the whole mind*, in all its faculties, and affections, and passions, is fleshly and corrupt. From hence have arisen all those subsequent evils that have appeared in the life; for it is the mind that influences and directs the actions of man. What a source of grief does this reflection open to the soul! It is not enough, then, that you repent on account of actual transgressions; you must mourn over the depravity of the heart. If your sorrow be that "godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of," it will be accompanied with deep humiliation of spirit, on account of your fall in Adam. And although you ought not, like Job, "to curse the day of your birth," since, if you find mercy of the Lord, you may rejoice that ever you were born; yet in tracing the sins of your heart and life, it is needful to recollect the beginning of your existence, because it was the beginning of your sinfulness. See then that there is no cause of boasting of your lineage and descent; for

what are we all but a sinful race, sprung from the original transgressor, who had most awfully “departed from the living God?”

2. But now let me entreat you, to survey the history of your past life, and to recollect your *actual transgression*. “Foolishness,” says Solomon, “is bound in the heart of a child.” Was not the truth of this maxim early manifested in your conduct? What vanities amused your mind! What petty trifles occasioned vexations, and peevishness, and fretfulness! How often were you unkind and disobedient to parents, or friends, and impatient to be freed from those restraints which they laid upon you! What *evil tempers*, what sullenness, and perverseness, and gloom were evidenced, so far as you were allowed to manifest them! And perhaps thoughts and purposes of revenge, or resolves of what you would do, a few years hence, in spite of all authority, lodged in your heart! Cast your eye over the immense volumes filled with the sins of your youth! How giddy, thoughtless, trifling! How headstrong and turbulent! How justly characterized as being “lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God!” What vain or lustful desires governed the heart! What follies consumed all your leisure hours! Imagination amused you with a thousand painted scenes, and you purposed many things; but never purposed thoroughly to turn to God, or never truly performed it. And as to your riper years, whether you be now in the meridian or decline of life, what do they present, but the continued unvarying effort of a worldly mind to provide for the body, without any due concern for the salvation of the soul! Nay, even the body is but miserably cared for, if we mind nothing more than obtaining food and raiment

for it in the present life, and take no serious thought to provide for its future glorification, by seeking in good earnest for present purity of heart. But this is the way of the world. "They spend their days in mirth," or in care; "and in a moment go down to the grave." Thus have you lived, "without God and without hope in the world:" Atheists in heart and life, though Christians in name and profession. Tell me, which of the laws of God have you not broken? When our Lord repeated a part of the commandments of the moral law to a young man who applied unto him for instruction, but who evidently knew not himself, he replied, "All these have I kept from my youth up." But, alas for you, O guilty sinner!, your answer must be exactly the reverse: All the commandments have I broken from my youth up; "every thought of the imagination of my heart has been evil, only evil, and that continually." "Who then can tell how oft he offendeth?" Will you attempt to compute the number of your sins? Go, count the drops of water in the ocean, or the sands that are its barrier on the shore. Sins meet you in every direction; they have been committed every day, every hour. I know not what you can do, but lay your hand upon your mouth, or cry GUILTY, GUILTY, before thee O Lord! Could the sins of your heart,—evil thoughts, evil desires, evil designs, and evil tempers,—together with the sins of your tongue, and of your life, be seen by you, *as they are seen by the infinitely holy God*, how would you "abhor yourselves, and repent as in dust and ashes?"

3. But this is only a partial view of your undeservings; for there are also *sins of omission* that demand repentance. In this manner God spake unto his ancient

people : “Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob ; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel !” Is not this strictly true in your case ? How often have you neglected prayer to the Most High ; perhaps for days, or weeks, or even years together ! Witness, ye deserted closets, against the multitude of prayerless Christians, so called, who seldom, or never, “bow their knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” What a shameful thing is it, for a man to live like a beast, without any sense, or acknowledgment, of his dependance upon God ! A man that lives without prayer, is sure to be damned ; since salvation is only given to those that “call on the name of the Lord.” And what guilt have you incurred by neglecting the book of God ! As though the holy scriptures,—which it required ages to complete, which contain the most important and useful information, which reveal God’s method of saving sinners, and which God himself inspired,—were not worthy of your attention ! You have read novels, travels, and history ; you have perused biography ;—but you have seldom deigned to cast a glance, and never to shed a tear, over that sacred book which contains the records of time and of eternity. Nor are broken Sabbaths among the least of your sins. How many Sabbath-days have you loitered away in idleness ; or spent in seeking your own pleasure, or in performing your own business ! Behold ! You have said of the day of the Lord, “What a weariness is it !” and yet have hoped to enter heaven, where eternity itself is a Sabbath ! See, “the deceitfulness of the heart,” and “the deceitfulness of sin.” As to relative duties, they have scarcely ever been thought of, much less punctually performed. No family altar, no family instruction, no family Christianity ; a baptized household, but all

leading mere Heathen lives; and amongst them all, Christ has not been so much as named, or worshipped, or adored.

4. Still, however, there has been, at times, some little outward profession of Christianity, which brings us to reflect on another species of transgression,—your *religious sins*. By such a strange expression I mean, the sins which have accompanied the performance of the duties of religion. “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.” How characteristic are these words of that devotion which you have presented in the house of God! Ought it not to make you almost shudder with horror, to reflect on the impiety of your most solemn prayers? The agonizing cry, the deeply important petition—“Lord, have mercy upon us!—Christ, have mercy upon us!—Lord, have mercy upon us!”—has come from your lips, when your heart has been as cold as marble, and you have not had the least sensibility of your guilt, or of your exposure to that misery from which nothing but the mercy of Christ could save you. And in what a manner have you joined in the confessions of the church; neither understanding, nor considering, nor feeling what you have said! Why, *your religion has been the grossest kind of irreligion!* But little better than *a solemn mockery of God*; a crime of which even fallen angels are not guilty! They feel their need of grace, while they scorn to ask it; but never do they *in a suppliant manner, hypocritically implore mercy* from the hands of God! As to the preached word, it has made but little impression on the mind; it has not converted the soul. According to the number of sermons you have heard without being saved, so often

have you “rejected the counsel of God.” It is, therefore, manifest to the conscience, that there is no good work, or word, or thought ; no, not one, on which you can rely for salvation.

Excluded is your every boast,
Your glory swallowed up in shame.

5. The *aggravating circumstances* that have attended your transgressions, must not be forgotten. Your sins have been committed, not in those “times of ignorance which God winked at,” but since the days when he “hath commanded all men every where to repent,” and even while that charge to repent has been sounding in your ears. The very name you bear,—“CHRISTIAN,”—leaves you wholly inexcusable; for it ought to have led you to inquire, “What is Christianity?” and to have been unceasing in your supplications for the Holy Spirit, to make you a Christian in deed and in truth. The Christian’s book was at hand; the Bible was every where to be met with; and had you been providentially deprived of every other help, it alone, prayerfully used, would have been sufficient to lead you savingly to the knowledge of God. But besides the written word, unto you has “the gospel been preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” Ah! Consider how often, and how powerfully that “good Spirit” has been striving with you

Through many long rebellious years.

“Oh that you had hearkened unto God, and walked in his ways! He would soon have subdued your enemies, and turned his hand against your adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted them-

selves unto him; but your time should have endured for ever. He would have fed you also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock would he have satisfied thee." (Psalm lxxxi. 13—16.) If to every one who hears the gospel, God saith, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," and if, with the word, the Eternal Spirit is given to enable men to prove obedient to that command, then may we conclude, that every one in such circumstances might be converted to God in the days of his youth, were it not for one sin, which is indeed the great crying sin of the whole world, *the sin of grieving the Holy Spirit of God*. Had it not been for your own aggravated offence, in "resisting the Holy Ghost;" instead of being a mourning penitent, you might have been a rejoicing believer, I will not say at this hour, but many years ago. O what happiness is lost! What time is lost! What opportunities of usefulness are gone! Eternity has swallowed up all the past days and years of your life; and you can only recollect, what you cannot recal, with the bitterest anguish of spirit, and the deepest sorrow and contrition of heart. It is by no means unbecoming in you, in such an hour of grief as this ought to be, to "smite upon your breast," while you groan, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

6. But after all that has been said, the great master-sin has not yet been distinctly mentioned. We have seen the boughs and branches and fruits of sin, but we come now to expose its roots, that are more hidden from human view, and that strike so deeply, and lay so fast a hold upon the sinner's heart. The sin from which all other sins proceed, is *unbelief*. The devils are not unbelievers; and damned spirits of our race are not unbe-

lievers; but *unbeliever* is the true characteristic of every unregenerate man upon the face of the earth. His "evil heart is a heart of unbelief." "He makes God a liar," by "saying in his heart, *There is no God*,"—denying his being, or his influence: Or, "Tush! thou God wilt not require it,"—and so denying his providence, or his retributive justice: The infidelity of professed Christians exceeds that of the Jews of old; it has *one peculiar feature*, which demonstrates that *unbelieving Christians are the most guilty unbelievers that have ever existed in the universe*. Read the sin of Israel, in Psalm lxxviii. 19—22: "They *believed* not in God, and *trusted* not in his salvation. Yea, they *spake against God*; they said, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* Behold! he smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed! *Can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?*" But while they thus spake,—"*Can he give bread? Can he give flesh? Can he furnish a table in this wilderness?*"—did they assemble together in one congregation, and at the same hour hypocritically profess to believe "in God the Father Almighty" *as able* to do all those things? Did they *repeat over their Belief in him, at the same hour that they made those unbelieving inquiries?* But behold, you have professed, ignorantly, yet falsely, professed to believe in God, and in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, and "in the forgiveness of sins," and yet in reality, by unbelief, you have rejected God and Christ, denied the influences of the Holy Ghost, and the possibility of obtaining pardon in this present life! O what guilt!—The proof of the existence of unbelief in the heart, is at once easy and convincing, plain yet powerful. "He that believeth," saith the scripture, "shall be saved;"

whence it follows, that he who is not saved is an unbeliever. He has no right faith in Christ. For “he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John iii. 36.)

7. Here then, my guilty brethren, you discover at once both the source of your former crimes, and the cause of your present wretchedness; and how necessary it is, that when “the Spirit convinces of sin,” he should especially convince “of unbelief.” Unbelief first made you guilty, and it keeps you in a guilty state: While its power remains, you will be shut up as in a prison, from which you cannot escape. If Jesus Christ invites you, saying, “Come unto me;” it is only by faith that you can come; if he be willing to bestow pardon, it is only by faith that you can receive it. Let not a sight and a sense of your guilt, as it hath now been set before you, discourage your souls; *but let it make Christ and his salvation the more welcome*, by how much the more you feel your own lost and ruined condition without an interest in his blood. Though burdened and heavy laden, still encourage hope, and cherish expectation of a present pardon, crying incessantly, “Lord, give me faith!”—Lord, increase my faith, while I proceed

II. To proclaim free and full forgiveness in the name of Jesus. “I, I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” There is nothing but encouragement in these gracious words; they are pregnant with blessings; they make known “mercy for all, immense, and free.” The Promiser, the promise itself, its kind application, and the

basis on which it rests, open to us four sources of the most abundant joy and consolation.

1. The Author of the promise. "I, I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions." Mourning sinners, do you know that voice? It is the voice of "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, pardoning iniquity, and transgression, and sin." He doth not commission a multitude of the heavenly host, to carry glad tidings of great joy to all who mourn over their transgressions; neither does he merely command the ministers of his word to speak comfortably unto them; but from his lofty throne he himself speaks unto their hearts. Will he render unto them according to their works? While they tremble in his presence, will he thunder forth, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?" No! Such a sentence never proceeded from the throne of grace against any one who approached it for mercy. Jesus is Jesus still; and though he is exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he remembers that he is exalted to save, and not to destroy. *It is the joy of Christ to pardon a guilty sinner.* He remembers his agony in the garden, and his pangs upon the cross, with a delight none but himself can feel, when the blood he poured forth is applied by the Spirit to the soul that feels its misery. While he neither extenuates the sin of man, nor at all excuses his offence, but in the fullest manner admits the enormity of his guilt, and of consequence the awful punishment that has been deserved, testifying, "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities;" yet when he sees that the sinner himself is also "wearied with his iniquities," grace drops from his lips, and he declares his readiness to grant

the most free, and full, and ample pardon that may be required.

2. Hence the promise in the text is expressed in the most cheering language. "I, I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and *will not remember thy sins.*" It is not uncommon for the scripture to represent sins as debts, an account of which is preserved in the book of the creditor. When the debt is paid, the sum is crossed over, to intimate that the creditor's demands are satisfied, and that the debtor is known in that character no longer. But, in our text, to point out the free and full manner in which God bestows pardon, the significant expression, "blotteth out," is used; the debt is not merely crossed, but obliterated, so that the record can be read no more. It is not unfrequently the case, that penitents feel their mind more particularly burdened with some one sin, which appears to them to exceed all the rest in magnitude, and for which they fear there is no forgiveness. But God Almighty, through the merits of his Son Jesus, *forgives large debts as well as small.* What we read in Luke vii. 40—42, will illustrate this matter. As Jesus sat at meat with a Pharisee, named Simon, he said unto him, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. He saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: The one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. *And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.*" O sinner, art thou a five-hundred pence debtor? And hast thou nothing to pay? Absolutely nothing?—Then here is thy discharge; my Lord releaseth thee from all demands, he "blotteth out" all thy sins. Nor will he make any demand on account of thy debt at any future day, "he will remember thy sins no more," neither in

time nor in eternity, if henceforward thou “doest that which is lawful and right,” by “continuing in his goodness” that thy soul may live. “O ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

3. But still the penitent sinner will reason and say, “Is it possible that the promise which is now explained “can belong to me? Were I like such an one, had I “not sinned more than such an individual who is seeking “salvation, I could venture to hope that in time I might “be pardoned! But I! what have I done? Ah! what “a guilty wretch! I am not fit to live upon earth, how “then can I ever hope to enter heaven? My sins are “of such an aggravating nature. And then again my “heart:—Ah! my heart is ‘very wickedness;’ hard “as a rock, and so unholy that it is nothing but pollution? Are not ‘the mercies of the Lord clean gone “for ever?’ Is not mine a lost case? Dare I hope?” —Thou mourner in Zion, thou shalt surely be saved! Thy self-despair makes it evident, that “thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” God will soon give unto thee “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” I will propound unto thee one question; hearken, and answer thou me. If the Lord Jesus were to come down from that resplendent throne where he sits at the right hand of the Father;—if he were to draw a veil over his glorified humanity, and to moderate the lustre of its brightness, so that mortals should be able again to look upon his countenance;—and were he to stand in the hallowed place which his ambassador now occupies, and to address this solemn assembly;—on whom would he cast a benign-

nant smile, and whom would he select from all this audience, as the object of his special favour and regard? Thee, O proud blasphemer, who "hatest knowledge?" Thee, O haughty Pharisee, who art "going about to establish thy own righteousness?" Nay, but he would bless and save thee, O unbelieving Thomas! Or thee, O weeping Mary! Unto thee would he say: "I, I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins."

Thou guilty child of Adam, Jesus Christ is here in his spiritual presence, and by the power of his Spirit; and sure I am, that he is now speaking to thy heart. The promise in my text is thy promise. Quite as much so, as if thy name had been expressed in it. I can give a solid and sufficient reason that may satisfy thee that this at least is spoken for thy encouragement, if thou fearest to claim any other word of consolation. *The promises of God are just suited to the condition of those to whom they are made.* Now does not this promise just suit thy state? Does it not answer to it as exactly as if it were written expressly for thee? That correspondence of misery on thy part, and of promised mercy on the part of God, is thy warrant to embrace it; from this consideration let thy soul derive vigour and strength to lay hold of it as thine own. Come then; no longer despair, doubt no more; "be not faithless, but believing." "I say unto thee," are the words of Jesus, "thy sins which are many are forgiven: Go in peace and sin no more."

4. The basis on which this promise rests may further assure us of the certainty of its fulfilment. "*For mine own sake, I will not remember thy sins.*" There is nothing a sinner so much reasons about as his unworthiness, when he is coming to Christ. He makes it the

ground of all its doubtings; whereas that is the very thing that makes Christ a suitable Saviour unto him. God forgives the guilty for his own sake, and not for the sake of their deservings. "For my name's sake will I defer mine anger; and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? I will not give my glory unto another." (Isaiah xlviii. 9—11.) A striking passage to the same effect we have in the prophet Ezekiel: (xxxvi:) "Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but *for mine holy name's sake*, which ye have profaned among the Heathen whither ye went. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: And I will away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. But *not for your sakes* do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: *Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways*, O house of Israel!"

God pardons the believing penitent *for his mercy's sake*. It is the property of the Eternal Jehovah "always to have mercy," agreeably to the declaration of his written word: "Whosoever the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." *It is the shewing of mercy that exalts the love of God*. Nothing can increase the willingness of God to pardon; because as he is "good," that is, good-

ness itself, pure, unchangeable, everlasting love, he must always be "ready to forgive all that call upon him." Yet that principle of benevolence towards guilty man is capable of various manifestations; and every act of free, unmerited grace in justifying the ungodly, furnishes a new display of its glory. *The salvation of every penitent sinner brings an eternity of glory to God.* Now God is concerned for his own honour; he, therefore, will save all that come unto him, through his Son Jesus Christ. Six thousand years have nearly elapsed since the fall of man, and amongst all the generations that have lived and died during those revolving ages, not an instance has been known of God's refusing to pardon a penitent sinner, who believed on his Son. And shalt thou be the first that Christ will abandon? Will God, "who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, that with him he might freely give us all things," withhold from thee that pardon, which, at his feet, thou art groaning to obtain? Why, if thou wert to perish, while coming to God in the way he himself hath appointed, what a triumph would it afford to all the powers of darkness? Though thou justly deservest hell on thine own account, yet if God were to banish thee to that place of torment, after he hath given thee "repentance unto life," and while thou art by his own Spirit led to him through the merits of his Son, the legions of fallen spirits would rejoice more in thy single destruction, than in the ruin of myriads of finally impenitent sinners; because thy destruction would tarnish the glory of the mercy of God. Fear not then; but earnestly and unceasingly plead the merits and the blood of Jesus, and God will save thee for his own sake; for the sake of his mercy, which has forgiven millions, and is even at this moment extended unto thee.

The Lord God will freely pardon all that believe, for *his justice sake*. What a fine passage of holy writ have we in Rom. iii. 23—26! “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare *his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God: To declare at this time *his righteousness*; that *he might be just*, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” These words shew the accomplishment of that prophecy spoken by the mouth of Isaiah concerning the Redeemer: “The Lord is well pleased for *his righteousness sake*; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.” (Isaiah xlii. 21.) The law is made honourable *by maintaining its justice*; and by making the very method of pardoning the guilty, a display of its holiness, and justice and goodness. Christ, therefore, “magnified the law,” not only in his holy life, by keeping it in every point; but more especially in his sacrificial death, by paying the penalty which we had incurred by our numerous transgressions. Christ is emphatically THE JUST ONE, for he became JUST, that he might become *merciful*; he paid our debts that he might have the right of remitting our offences. “My just servant,” saith the Father, “shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isaiah liii, 11.) On the ground then of the all-sufficient atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is for the honour of the justice of God, to pardon the guilty, the moment he confesses his sins, and truly believes upon the righteous Saviour. Who could ever have conceived that justice should have been glorified, by sheathing her sword, and taking the golden

sceptre from the hands of mercy ; and that justice itself should have held it out to the sinner, that he might touch and live? Yet so it is, in the wonderful economy of grace to man. "Righteousness" herself "looks down from heaven" on every penitent, not to demand vengeance, but *to exercise her right of blessing*. As she looks, "the Lord gives that which is good." And when Jehovah bows his heavens and comes down in the power of his Spirit, *justice is his gracious harbinger*, for "righteousness goes before him;" and as he passes by, righteousness proclaims his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious;" and righteousness upraises the drooping sinner, and "sets him in the way of his Maker's steps." Justice pardons; justice sanctifies; and justice glorifies for evermore. This is an inspired prayer: "*For thy righteousness sake, bring my soul out of trouble.*" Because God is just, he declares, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. viii. 12.)

God is also willing to pardon *for his truth's sake*. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." All the promises of God's word are in accordance with that revelation of his character. To cite only one, as a summary of the whole: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Now God will as surely perform all his promises as his threatenings; he will as certainly shew mercy to all that turn from their evil ways, as he will punish, with everlasting misery, those, who by con-

tinuing impenitent “treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” “God,” says the Apostle, “*who cannot lie*, hath promised eternal life, before the world began,” and “hath in due time” more fully “manifested” that eternal life in “his word through preaching.” Hence we now declare unto you, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Thus we see, that “mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” (Psalm lxxxv. 10.) We see that as the promise rests on a foundation that cannot be shaken, we ought with confidence and joy to receive the glad word, “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, *for mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins.”—Let me then, Thirdly, bring forward

III. The invitation, urging you to accept the proffered mercy.

“Put me in remembrance; let us plead together: Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.”

These glorious words invite all the contrite in heart into the presence of God. It bids them no longer stand in the outward court, nor yet to remain as it were trembling without the vail; but to “have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” and there before him who sitteth between the Cherubim, to prefer their requests, assured that he will “fulfil all their petitions.” In presenting those petitions they have a threefold duty to perform:

1. To state the grounds on which they expect an answer: “Put me in remembrance:”

2. To urge in humble confidence their requests :
 “ Let us plead together.”

3. To claim in strong faith the promised blessing :
 “ Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.”

Mourning sinners ! You are now waiting before the mercy seat of God. This is his house : It is called BETHESDA, because it is the place where he sheweth mercy. In this very chapel many a sinner has been forgiven : And the cloud of the Divine Glory still abideth with us. Here we have the ark of the Lord, and the sacred gospel ; here we have the true candlestick, and the priests of the Sanctuary who cause the light to shine day and night in the temple ; here we offer the pure incense of prayer and praise ; and here the “ Lord commandeth his blessing to rest, even life for evermore.” You feel your guilt, are desiring pardon, and expecting an answer of peace : Draw nigh, and *state the grounds* on which your expectation is founded. “ Put me in remembrance,” saith the Lord. Thus he speaks in compassion to our infirmities, and to encourage us to come “ with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy.”

Put him in remembrance of Gethsemane and the cross. Say unto him :—“ Have not I heard that thou, the Lord, the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth,” and the “ God of the Spirits of all flesh,” hast “ given thyself a ransom for the sins of the world ?” O “ thou Lord of glory, who sittest on thy throne, high and lifted up,” and before whom the Seraphim “ cry, *Holy, Holy, Holy,*” art thou not he “ who was made in the likeness of sinful flesh ?” Art thou not he who “ did become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ?” Is not thy distinguishing name

IMMANUEL?" Is not "the whole earth full of thy glory" as Jesus, the Redeemer of sinners? Wast thou not "made a little lower than the angels," who are adoring thee as "the Son, whose throne is for ever and ever," for "the *suffering* of death, that, by the grace of God, thou mightest taste death for every man?" Didst not thou tread the wine-press of the wrath of God in Gethsemane? Hast thou forgotten Gethsemane, when thine own "blood stained all thy garments?" Dost thou not remember Calvary, thine own agonies, and powerful intercession for thy murderers; and thy giving up of thy ghost? What mean those sacred wounds? Are they not the everlasting emblems of thy love to sinners,—to the "chief of sinners," even to me?—By those wounds, and by that precious blood which thou hast shed, and by all that thou hast ever done for the salvation of a guilty world, I plead for mercy. *Thou didst die for me.* Lord, I am the workmanship of thine hands, and this guilty soul of mine is the purchase of thy blood. *My name*, and *my sins*, are all connected with *thy* name, and with *thy* redemption: And on that ground I venture to hope thou wilt not bid me depart without the blessing of peace.

Put your Redeemer in remembrance also of his promises. And here I would meet an objection that is often a source of great discouragement to awakened and mourning sinners. They complain of great darkness of mind, and such deplorable ignorance, that they know not how to pray. They are as one dumb in the presence of God, and perhaps can scarcely utter any thing more than "God be merciful to me a sinner!" If indeed they can offer no other prayer, that single

petition urged in the name of Jesus, would not fail in bringing pardon to the heart. But, for the direction and encouragement of all such distressed souls, let me observe, that *the best prayers penitent sinners can use are the promises of God. Turn those promises into petitions*; and then not only will the language be suitable, but it will be so cheering, that faith will more or less spring up in the heart. Take then your Bible into the closet, and open on some of the promises made to those who repent; and, falling on your knees, put God in remembrance of his own words.—“Lord God, I bring my Charter in my hand. Thus thou hast said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ ‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ ‘Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ ‘This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days’ of disobedience, when they shall turn unto me with all the heart, and with all the soul; ‘I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.’ ‘Prove me now here-with, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’—These are thine own promises, O thou whose name is, ‘AMEN; FAITHFUL and TRUE:’ ‘Redeemer;’ ‘Lord God of Truth:’ ‘The same to-day, yesterday, and for ever;’ and wilt thou then deny thy own word? Heinous as my

“ offences are, and justly as I deserve to fall into that
“ opening gulph which yawns to receive my wretched
“ soul, can I perish while I cling to thy promises as my
“ only hope? If I perish, then will it be said, ‘ Because
“ he who is called *the friend of sinners* was not able to
“ save one that was burdened and heavy laden, that
“ came to him on his own invitation, he permitted him
“ to sink under his intolerable load.’ Then will my
“ crimson sins remain, though I have reasoned with
“ thee; then shall I be cast out, though I have come
“ unto thee. God of eternal truth and grace! I
“ cannot perish! No, Glory to thy Name, I cannot
“ perish! I shall be saved, now and evermore. Lord, I
“ believe, help thou my unbelief.”

Let the Saviour also be put in remembrance of his wonted compassions to sinners. To this end, you will do well to consider the records the Evangelists have preserved of the life and charities of the Son of God. What abundant encouragement may we derive from their history, to trust in Him, and to believe with all our hearts that we may have life through his name! We see in it, that he came “ not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” All the miracles he wrought while dwelling amongst us, *were miracles of grace*. It well becomes penitent sinners to plead before their Redeemer, as a ground of their hope, his own life and labours, when he was “ a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”—“ O Lord Jesus, King of Glory,” yet Saviour of the lost, didst thou not give sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead? Didst not thou cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils? Didst not thou “ forgive sins?” Were not those “ mighty works” performed in

a moment ; by a touch, a word, a look ? And has thy name lost its virtue, and thine arm its power, and thine eye its pity ? Or art thou “ the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever ? ” — “ What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? ” This great multitude, which cannot be numbered, “ from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, that stand before the throne, crying, *Salvation unto God ?* ” — Methinks, O penitent, he that sitteth on the throne himself replies, “ All of them were once sinners *like unto thee !* But they were washed, but they were sanctified, but they were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. ” — If then there be millions of sinners, who, saved on earth, are now inhabiting glory, there are millions of arguments, beside those that may be gathered from the gospel history, to warrant you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may be justified. There is the same atoning blood to cleanse you, that sanctified them ; and the same Holy Spirit to give it all its efficacy to your hearts. On these grounds you may well ask in faith, nothing doubting, that you may receive pardon, and “ that your joy may be full. ” Be encouraged then

2. To urge in humble confidence your supplications ;
 “ Let us plead together. ”

There is a fine passage in the Book of Job, (which indeed shews that he was not unacquainted with the Jewish history,) that will illustrate this part of the text. Job. xxiii. 1—7. “ Then Job answered Eliphaz and said, — Even to-day is my complaint bitter ; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him ! *I would come even to his seat ! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with argu-*

ments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. *Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.* There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge." Here is a sinful worm introduced into the presence of the Almighty God. *Weakness itself called upon to plead with might!* What an unequal contest? "Will he plead *against me,*" says Job, "with his great power?" Will He employ it to crush me, to put me to utter confusion? No; but he will *exert it for me,* his power shall be mighty on my behalf, for "he will *put strength in me.*" He will impart strength by giving Faith, so shall I be enabled "to take hold of his strength, that he may make peace with me, and he will make peace with me." (Isaiah xxvii. 5.) Then, being justified, or accounted righteous, "I might dispute with him,"—make manifest before him my title to the promises as a child of God; "so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge," or judgment, the sentence of condemnation that lies against me. To this duty then you are now called by the Saviour himself:—"Let us," says he, "plead together."

Let the pleading begin on your part; and let this be your encouragement, that the Holy Spirit will "help your infirmities." Here recollect the truths that have been advanced in illustration of the preceding sentence, "Put me in remembrance;" and make a right use and application of them. As it regards yourself, you have no wisdom, no righteousness, no holiness of your own; nothing but sinfulness and unworthiness, from your natal hour up to the present moment. All your pleadings,

therefore, must be drawn from some other source than your own merit. You must begin by an utter renunciation of all your own doings; by the most absolute disclaiming of the least dependance on any thing you ever have done, or ever can do, by way of meriting the favour of God. All your arguments must be such as proceed from a full and an unqualified admission of your own guilt, a ready acknowledgment of past sinfulness, of your present undeservings, and of your utter helplessness. *Confession of guilt is indeed one of the most powerful pleas which a sinner can use with Christ, for the obtaining of mercy.* She who, in the days of his flesh, "stood at his feet behind him weeping," and bathing them with her tears, did effectually plead with him; that silent confession of demerit was a plea not to be resisted, Jesus said unto her, "Go in peace."

But saith the Redeemer, "Let us plead *together*:" Listen therefore to his pleadings with you. Now if you hearken to the voice of his Spirit, you will find that his pleading in the heart of a mourner exactly corresponds with his intercession before the throne of God. Before that throne he appears in the character of an advocate: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." It is because his propitiatory sacrifice has been accepted of the Father, that he becomes our Advocate; it is his atonement that renders his Advocacy so powerful and effectual on behalf of humbled sinners. You then have not to plead with an enemy, nor with a righteous judge; but *with your own Advocate*, with your compassionate Saviour. His arguments, therefore, in this pleading, will correspond with your own. Renouncing your own righteousness, you

plead his merits ; he also pleads those merits as a reason why you should no longer doubt, but take him as “ the Lord in whom you have righteousness and strength.” His method of pleading will be by reminding you of the Divine Promises, and if there be any upbraiding at all on his part, it will be nothing more than is contained in these scriptures : “ Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name ; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Thomas ! “ Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : And be not faithless, but believing !”—Seeing then that you have such a Redeemer to plead with, let me exhort you

3. To claim in strong Faith the promised blessing : “ Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.”

“ All things are now ready :” Pardon is now about to be bestowed ; “ he is near that justifieth you,” and angels are waiting to rejoice over another heir of glory. The gospel has been preached to you, and the Spirit has accompanied the word ; you have been humbled, and encouraged, and drawn by strong desire, and long-ing expectation for a present salvation. And still you are crying out, “ I wait for thy salvation, O Lord.”—“ Behold,” O penitent, “ thy salvation cometh.” *Nothing is wanting to present pardon, but thine own declaration* : “ Declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.” Dost thou inquire, “ What must I declare ?” Declare with all thine heart, “ I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts viii. 37.) I believe that he is My Saviour, My Lord, and My God ! He is all mine own. I take him for “ my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption !” “ Christ is all in all !”

Lord, I believe thy precious blood,
 Which at the mercy-seat of God
 For ever doth for sinners plead,
 For me, even for *my* soul, was shed.

It is enough ; I want no other Saviour, Christ is all-sufficient. “ Plenteous grace with him is found, grace to cover all my sin.” I will have none besides ; I want nothing but his cross, his blood, his righteousness, his intercession : I will not doubt one moment longer, I will no more say, “ The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord forgotten me ;” but I now at this moment, give full credence to his word, and rest for ever satisfied with these eternal promises :—“ For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me ; for as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” (Isaiah liv. 7—11.)

Do ye indeed now believe ? And have you found rest unto your soul ? Hath God at this hour “ blotted out your transgressions ?” “ O praise the Lord, all ye nations ! Praise him, all ye people ! For his merciful kindness is great towards us : And the *truth of the Lord endureth for ever*. Hallelujah ! Praise ye the Lord ! “ Sing, O Heavens, and be joyful O earth ! And break forth into singing O mountains ! For the

Lord hath comforted his people, and hath had mercy on his afflicted. He hath made the mourner to hear joy and gladness, and has caused the bones that he had broken to rejoice." O thou child of God, we welcome thee as "a fellow-citizen of the saints, and one of the household of God." "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and your joy let no one take from you." You need never come into condemnation any more. You need never lose your "first love;" it is your happy privilege to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free," until *pardonings* love shall ripen into the perfect love of God. Be *humbly believing*, "holding fast the beginning of your confidence, steadfast unto the end," and "you shall never fall: For so an entrance shall finally be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—"Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: For the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

SERMON XIII.

THE GOSPEL COMMAND:

A SERMON DELIVERED TO A CONGREGATION OF SLAVES.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.—Acts xvii. 30, 31.

THESE words were spoken by a very great preacher of God's word. His name was Paul. This Paul was once an enemy to the religion of Jesus Christ, and a persecutor of all that were called Christians. But that was in "the times of his ignorance;" as he himself confessed afterwards, that he did it "ignorantly and in unbelief." You see what a sad thing it is to be ignorant, for it leads people to call evil, *good*; and to think they are doing what is *right*, when, according to God's word, they are doing what is *wrong*.

But Jesus Christ had mercy upon Paul, or *Saul* as he was then called. In a very wonderful manner Jesus Christ converted him; that is, changed his mind, and heart, and life. He then made him a minister, and sent him to "preach the faith which he once destroyed." This circumstance shews us the riches of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now this Paul, after his conversion, became a Missionary, that is, one who leaves his own country, and, from love to the souls of the Heathen, goes to preach the gospel unto them. In this respect, we, that are called *missionaries*, strive to be like him, and are come to preach unto you. In our own country, England—that good country—we heard that you knew not Jesus Christ our Saviour: We loved you, though we had never seen you: And because we wish you to be good and happy in this world, and after you die, we have left our parents, and brethren, and sisters, and are come to teach you the way to heaven. May the Lord help you to understand what we say, that your souls may be saved.

I. Before the gospel is brought to any people, the times in which they live are *times of ignorance*.

Our hearts are not naturally wise, any more than good;—if they were, there would be “no times of ignorance.” Think what this world would be, if there were no sun; it would be a world of darkness, and of night. But when the sun arises it is day, and light shines all around. Now where the gospel is not known, it is night to the souls of men: But when the gospel comes, “the people that sat in darkness, see a great light.”

Without the gospel, men are ignorant of God. They do not know who he is. They know not by what name to call him. No people on the face of the earth has ever yet found out a proper name for God, until they have learned it from the Bible. This shews that the heart of man is not good; for if his heart were good, it would be like God, and so of itself would teach him who

God is. The ignorance of man, therefore, as well as his wickedness, makes it plain that he is a fallen creature. But the gospel teaches us to know God. It teaches us to call him the "Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." It tells us, that he is not "like unto gold, or silver, or stone, or any image that man can make to resemble him." God cannot be seen; but he sees all things. He is that great, wise, holy, and good Being, who dwells in heaven, and who looks down from heaven upon all the children of men. We can go no where to be hidden from him. "If we ascend up to heaven, he is there; if we make our bed in hell, he is there also." "The darkness hideth not from him, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to him." Ought you not to fear this Almighty God? And whenever you are tempted to steal, or to do any bad thing, instead of saying to your heart, *No one sees me*, you should say, "Thou God, seest me! How can I do this wickedness and sin against God!"

Men are ignorant of themselves, without the gospel. They know not whence they came, what they are, nor whither they are going. They do not know that they have souls: And when they die, they cannot tell what will become of them. Some of you Africans think, that you go to your own country; or to some place, where you will meet with your countrymen and friends. This is one of the devil's delusions to keep you from seeking that heaven where all good people dwell, "from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue," and where all are for ever happy. But the gospel teaches us how man first came into being. It says, "We are all the offspring of God." All other creatures came

from the earth, but man is the offspring of God. He is their *Maker*, but our *Father*. And he "hath made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth." In the beginning of the world, God made one man and one woman, named Adam and Eve; and from these two persons all mankind have descended. He only made one original pair, that the whole human race might be regarded as one family, living together with love, without envying one another. "God made man upright." But before he had any sons, he disobeyed God, and became a sinner; hence it is that all mankind have become sinful. We are "conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity." Man dies, because he is a sinner. But what becomes of him after death? This great question the gospel answers. It teaches us, that the soul of man never dies. The soul of man is that immortal principle within him which understands. If I were to go and preach to the beasts of the field, they would not understand me, because the beasts have not a rational soul: But you understand me; I speak a word, and the moment it has proceeded out of my mouth, the meaning is conveyed to the understanding of all in this congregation. But it is not the body that understands; for if you call a *dead* man, he will not hear you; it is only a living man that can understand. Whence it follows, there must be a something within every living man which thinks, and knows, and understands, and fears, and loves; and that is what we call "the soul." Now when a good man dies, his soul goes to God; but when a wicked man dies, his soul goes to hell.

Men do not know Jesus Christ, until the gospel makes him known. I can very easily prove this to you; for, until you were brought here, you never heard of the

name of Jesus. That is a very blessed name. Rightly understood, *it teaches us every thing*; it teaches us that we are lost, and it brings salvation. What a blessing it is, that you have now an opportunity of hearing "Christ preached!" If you repent and believe on his name, you all will be made truly happy. The knowledge of Christ is peculiar to the gospel. The works of God,—the sun, and moon, and stars,—the heaven, and earth, and seas,—and all creatures and things that are in them,—make known God as *the Creator*, when the mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit; but they do not give the faintest notion of a *Redeemer*, nor shew how guilty man may be saved. Thus is it "the times of ignorance" with men, until they receive the holy word of God.

Not that men are excused, if they sin against God, because of their ignorance; for, before the gospel comes, it is their duty, "to seek the Lord, if haply, by feeling after him, they might find him." Were Heathens to do so, certainly the Heathen would find him. But instead of feeling after him, they wander from him more and more, and "love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." Hence every generation becomes plunged in grosser ignorance, and the darkness thickens every succeeding year. This is God's way of punishing them for their depravity. When, therefore, we read in the text, "the times of this ignorance God winked at," we must not understand it to mean that God took no notice of their sins, and was not angry with them for it; but only that he made due allowance for their ignorance *so far as it was unavoidable*; and that he rather *pitied* than *punished to the full* their ignorance, even when it had been for a course of ages wilful. Hence, instead of leaving them for ever to walk in their

own darkness, he sent them a clearer light than had ever before shone upon the world, even the light of the everlasting gospel.

II. The gospel of Jesus Christ requires us to repent. Repentance is very much spoken of in the word of God.

It is called the "foundation" of religion, because it is the first thing necessary to salvation. A man never does any thing to please God, until he repents of his sins. These are some of the passages that we read in the Bible concerning repentance: "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn and live ye.—Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.—Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—Repent, and turn to God.—Jesus preached, saying, Repent ye, and believe the gospel.—Jesus said, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—It was necessary for Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations.—God commandeth *all men, every where* to repent." Thus, you see, the holy book, the Bible, says a great deal about repentance; and it speaks to us about it in the plainest manner. And so necessary is repentance, that Jesus Christ himself, the great God and Saviour of the world, will not save any man without it.

I shall explain to you in a few words what repentance is. It is "godly sorrow" for sin. It is called "*godly* sorrow" because it comes from God; it is God's gift. So we read in the Bible; "God hath exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." For this reason it is that there is no repentance in hell. There the wicked feel *sorrow* on account of punishment," and because of that "fiery indignation" which "devours" them; but they have no "*godly* sorrow," because the Holy Spirit is not given to them. It is only in this life that man can repent; if he do not, in the other world, instead of repenting, he must perish. Now you all know what it is to feel sorrow. If any trouble befalls you, you cry; if your wife or your children die, you weep, and some of you cry out, and make a great noise when you follow them to the grave. But did you never weep on account of your sins? When the heart feels grief and trouble, because we have done what is evil, and a desire, leading us to pray to God that we may do so no more, that is repentance. O let me exhort you to repent! You that get drunk, you that curse, you that tell lies, you that steal, you that have two wives, you that are lazy, you that are always quarrelling, repent, repent, I beseech you; for "if you die in your sins, where God is you can never come."

Sin is the greatest evil in the world. It was the beginning of evils; it is the continuance of all others; and it is sin that leads down to hell. It was sin that caused Jesus Christ to die. Wonderful was the love of Christ to guilty man. He came from heaven to earth, to save him. But so wicked was man, that he put Christ to death, by nailing him to the cross; and, as he hung

upon the cross, a soldier plunged a spear into his side, that reached his very heart, from whence flowed blood and water. But Christ loved his enemies, and died for their salvation. Indeed, that gracious Saviour loved all mankind; yea, he loved you, and he loves you now, and waits to bless and pardon all your souls. You will sometimes say, when we charge you to repent, that you are not so bad as many other people, and that you have never committed any very great sin. No! But you have; you have every one been guilty of the foulest crime that was ever committed on the earth. If you have not been "men-slayers, or murderers of fathers, or murderers of mothers;" verily you have all been concerned in the death of the Son of God. *Your sins* caused him to die. "He was wounded for *your* transgressions, he was bruised for *your* iniquities; the chastisement of *your* peace was upon him, that by his stripes *you* might be healed." Ah! sinful man, thou hast pierced the side of our Lord Jesus Christ. O! Look unto him whom you have pierced, and mourn.

To mourn on account of sin, is the duty of every man. "God *commandeth all men every where* to repent." It is of no use for you to tell the preacher, that you cannot read, that you do not understand; the very excuse shews, that you do understand, for you would not wish to avoid a duty of which you had no idea. Take care then, that you do not fight against God. You know how to sin; you may, therefore, know how to repent. To repent, is God's command, not mine. That command now comes to you; to "all men every where." You would not repent in your own country. God has, therefore, by bringing you to this land, punished you for worshipping devils, and trusting to *gree-grees*,

(charms or amulets,) and a great many wicked things that you and your fathers have done. But mercy is mixed with the punishment, for he has brought you hither for good, that you may repent and be saved.

Repentance is a *present* duty. God *now* commands it. You young people must not stay till you get old; *now*, before your hearts are "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin," let your heart be pained because of the sins of your youth. Flee temptation. Sin to please no one. Be obedient in every matter that is not sinful; but if allured to iniquity, you must "obey God rather than man." Live not according to custom, but according to the Christian religion. And from this hour resolve, that you will be truly sorry for all that is past, and "go and sin no more." As to you that are old, and just trembling over the grave, you have not a moment to lose. "To-day, while it is called to-day," O turn unto the Lord. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

But while I bid you repent, I must not forget the most important part of my whole sermon: I mean that which relates to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. For this reason those who are baptized, are baptized in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Baptism is the most solemn dedication of a redeemed sinner to God. It is an acknowledgment of that right which none but God, or Jehovah, hath, to reign and rule over us, in time and to all eternity. As the Holy Spirit is God, he is the source of

all good, and must "work in us to will and do of his good pleasure," before we can have either inclination or power to repent, or pray, or do any good thing. This Spirit is now given to you; for the Spirit is bestowed wherever God's command to repent comes. And God is willing, through Christ, to give you his Holy Spirit, in a still more abundant manner, that you may be enlightened, convinced, converted, pardoned, or justified, and for ever saved. In closing then this part of the discourse, I would teach you one short prayer. Let me entreat every one of you to kneel upon your knees this night, and before you go to sleep, earnestly pray, "O Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me thy Holy Spirit." I repeat it over, that you may all perfectly remember it: Say, "O Lord—for the sake of Jesus Christ—give me thy Holy Spirit."—Pray that prayer night and day, till God converts and saves your souls. And may he abundantly pour his Spirit on you all for the glory of his great name!

III. We must repent, because God will judge the world. "He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained."

God will judge the mankind by Jesus Christ. God the "Father judgeth no man" immediately in his own person, "but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." "He hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man." It is Christ who shall "descend from heaven;" he shall come "as the Son of man in his glory, and all the holy angels with him!" Hence he is called in the text "that *man* whom

God hath ordained," or appointed, to be the Judge. How grand, and solemn, and awful, will his coming be ! The earth shall tremble at his presence, when he is revealed from heaven. Angels in countless numbers attend him, and the archangel's mighty voice proclaims his coming, with the shouts of the heavenly host. Upon a great white throne the Judge sits. He calls aloud, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!* His voice is heard throughout the whole world. "The sea gives up the dead which are in it ; and death and hell deliver up the dead which are in them." "All that are in their graves hear his voice and come forth : And the dead, small and great, stand before God." And, amongst them, every one of you will be found. In a few years you will die and be buried, and your souls will go into the invisible world. But your bodies, that return to dust, will not be forgotten for ever. Your graves will open, your bodies will be raised up, your eyes that now look on me, shall see for themselves the great Judge, and the whole world assembled before him ; and your ears shall hear that sentence of joy or misery which, according to the proceeding of that day, shall be just.

For the world shall be judged in righteousness. Every man shall be judged according to a righteous law. Those who have heard the gospel shall be judged by the gospel. This is the law relating to them, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." According to this law shall it be decreed in regard to them, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still : " Or, "he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The Judge will be impartial ; as "the

Judge of all the earth, he will do right," "rendering unto every man according to his works." The wicked shall be placed on his left hand, and the righteous on the right: And it shall be made manifest of all whom he condemns, that he "gave them space to repent, but they repented not." No man shall eternally perish because he was born in sin, or because he had sinned: But they who are lost will die, because they repented not, and did not turn from all their sins to God. Jesus Christ will not ask you, *What country did you come from? Were you rich or poor, slave or free, white or black?* But, *Did you repent?* If not, you cannot say, *We never heard of repentance;* for I have preached it unto you at this hour. But if you die without it, he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" But if you have repented, and believed on his name, you shall "find mercy in that day;" for the righteous reward Christ shall bestow, will be an eternal confirmation of that mercy which he shewed on earth in pardoning all your iniquities. He will pronounce, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

O then let me conclude by exhorting you all to this great duty of repentance. As you close your eyes in sleep to-night, hear a voice sounding in your ears, *Repent! Repent!* While at your labour in the field to-morrow, hear the same voice, crying *Repent!* And if you can remember no more of the sermon, do remember at least this one word, *Repent!* Think upon it. Think about it a great deal. Forsake your dances, and all your pleasures, and all your sins, and pray for repentance. And if you feel any sorrow for

sin, and a desire to serve God and save your souls springing up in the heart, and a willingness to be further instructed in the way to heaven; ask me any question at any time, and I shall be happy to teach you, and to direct you to a few good people, who will endeavour to help you on, in seeking the way to heaven. May God bless you all! May he give you repentance for all your sins past up to this hour! May he pardon, and save you, through our only Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen!

SERMON XIV.

*CHRIST, OUR SAVIOUR, EXAMPLE,
AND JUDGE.*

A SECOND SERMON DELIVERED TO A CONGREGATION OF
SLAVES.

Looking unto Jesus.—Heb. xii. 2.

THE Bible is a most blessed book ; it contains every thing is necessary to be known, in order to our salvation. All that we teach you is taken from the Bible ; we tell you nothing that is of our own inventing ; all that we say comes from the book of God. This ought to make you very attentive and serious while hearing. Our sermons contain much of God Almighty's own words ; and when we do not repeat his words, still we speak agreeably to the " oracles of God."

It is your duty to learn as much of the Bible as you can. If you have opportunity, you should attend Sunday schools ; or, if you cannot attend, you should strive to send your children, that they may learn to read God's book. If you cannot do either, as often as your duties to your master and to your families, for whose comfort you ought to provide by industry, will permit, you should request any good person you know to read a little of the scriptures unto you. And you should ac-

custom yourselves to *think* on all you hear ; for it is by thinking that we are made wise, and are enabled to understand.

My text is very short, but it is connected with a great many verses, indeed with the whole chapter that goes before it. That chapter is one of the finest histories in the world. It teaches us much in a few words. It is a history of the most remarkable events in the lives of the best and greatest men that have ever lived, from the beginning of the world down to the time of Jesus Christ. The names of some of them were Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and Moses. I will tell you a little about them. Abel was the son of Adam, the first man. He was a good man, for he prayed to God through Jesus Christ ; but his own wicked brother Cain killed him. Enoch was a very holy man, and led a good life before his family ; and God took him up to heaven without dying. Noah was a righteous man, when all mankind had become wicked. God was then so angry for the crimes of men, that he drowned the whole world with water ; only eight persons being saved alive ; namely Noah, and his wife, and Noah's three sons, and each of their wives. If any of Noah's sons had been so wicked as to have had *two* wives, God would have probably destroyed him also. Abraham was a wonderful man. He was remarkable for his faith in God and Christ. He was the father of all who are now called Jews. God called him to go out of his own country, because it was a sinful one ; and he went out, and travelled just as God directed him. This teaches us, that it does not matter where a man lives, whether in his own country, or amongst strangers, if he only fear and serve God. We should always think, that it is God

who orders or permits every thing which befalls us ; so that we ought to “learn, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content.” Joseph was the great grandson of Abraham ; and when Joseph was a lad, about seventeen years old, his own brethren through envy, sold him for a slave. But Joseph was one of the best of men, and never ran away from his master, never stole from him, was always industrious and faithful ; and though very ill used without deserving it, he never once said any thing bad of his master, nor yet reviled his mistress, though she was a very wicked woman. Moses also was descended from Abraham ; and by him God Almighty delivered the Jews out of the land of Egypt.

Now after the apostle has mentioned all these good men, he gives us the advice in the text. He does not say, *Looking unto Abram*, or *unto Moses* ; but he directs us to one greater than all, saying, “Looking unto Jesus.” As though he had said—You Christians are like persons running in a race ; you must not be slothful, nor suffer your attention to be diverted : All those good men of former times are looking to see how you exert yourselves ; but you must not look on the crowd of spectators, but only on Jesus, who stands at the end of the race, holding the prize in view. “So run that ye may obtain.”

I shall now explain the text in three particulars. We must be looking unto Jesus,

- I. As our Saviour.
- II. As our Example.
- III. As our Judge.

I. AS OUR SAVIOUR.

There is one name, the Bible tells us, that is above

every name: And that is the mighty name JESUS! That name signifies Saviour; as it was said at the birth of Christ, "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."

We need a Saviour, because we are sinners. Man is not now what he was when God made him. Then he was holy and happy, now he is sinful and miserable. His heart, his tempers, his desires, his thoughts, his words, his actions, are all evil. They do not become evil in process of time, but they are "evil from his youth up;" "he goes astray from the womb." And no wonder when "he is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity." Need I prove to you, that you are sinners? Your own conscience tells you, that you have done the things you ought not to have done, and have left undone what you ought to have done. Anger, envy, lust, idleness, drunkenness, revellings, are all sins in which you have indulged. You have not merely committed those sins, but you have loved them; your heart has felt a delight in them, so that the scripture speaketh truly when it says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Such being our sinfulness, and such the state of our heart, we are "guilty before God;" and as we have no power to save our own souls, we must have been for ever lost, if Jesus Christ had not become a Saviour unto us.

But Christ hath become our *atoning* Saviour. He is "God over all, blessed for ever." But, in "the fulness of time," he came forth from God, and, as it regards his human body and soul, he was "made of a woman." "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary." After living a holy and useful life, he was charged with being a rebel against the govern-

ment before Pontius Pilate. But, in reality, he had taught the people, as he teaches us, to render unto the king, what belongs to the king : While those who clamoured against him were themselves, soon after, guilty of the very crime they laid to his charge, and brought destruction upon their whole country. But though Jesus Christ had “done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth ;” yet did he submit to violence ; and, that his Father’s will might be done, he “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” He died on the cross, that we might never perish. “He gave himself a ransom for many.” “He died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us nigh to God.” Through the shedding of his blood, a way was opened for God to be reconciled to the world, consistent with his justice, and holiness, and truth. And when Jesus had offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, and had lain three days in the grave, he arose from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, where he is now exalted at the right hand of God, to pray for us. In this way did he become our Saviour.

Christ is the *only* Saviour. “There is salvation in no other ; neither is there any other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.” Ministers, who preach to you the word of life, cannot save your souls. We can only “preach unto you Christ Jesus the Lord.” Millions of immortal spirits have been brought to heaven out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue ; but every one has been saved “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Your own prayers and repentance do not, according to the law of works, merit for you pardon, or any blessing ; you must not trust in them, either in whole or in part, but

solely in "the only wise God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Now as a Saviour, you must look unto him. My text says, "Looking unto Jesus." It is not enough to hear about him, and to be pleased with what you hear; that will not bring his salvation to your heart, unless you look unto him. As he says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Look unto him as a dying Saviour, till your hearts are broken and contrite. See him crucified on the hill of Calvary for you. "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" Believe on his name, and you shall find pardon through the blood of the cross. God will give you comfort and peace: And his "love shall be shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto you." His Spirit will be your comforter. He will witness, that you are a child of God; and will enable you to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Look unto Jesus as your risen and interceding Saviour. This will increase your comfort. It will encourage you, in the midst of all your troubles on earth, to remember that God's own beloved Son is your constant Friend in heaven. You then shall find his words true, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." But if we truly know Christ as a Saviour, we shall live as he lived below.

II. Look unto Jesus AS YOUR EXAMPLE.

"I have given you an example," said the Redeemer unto his own disciples, "that ye should do, as I have done to you." And St. Peter observes, "He hath left us an example, that we should tread in his steps." Christ's example is one of universal goodness. He was "without

sin ; no guile was found in his mouth ; and he went about doing good." His example may be divided into two parts : He hath shewed us *how to do good*, and *how to suffer ill*.

As to *doing good* : If we begin with his early years, he is an example of obedience to parents. Though he was the Son of God, yet as the Son of Man, he was dutiful to his mother, and to him whom people thought to be his father. He lived with them at Nazareth, and was "subject unto them." This part of the life of Jesus Christ may teach you a great deal ; whether you be children, or men and women. You children should learn to imitate Christ. You should very much love your father and mother ; and do all you can to oblige them, and make them happy. You should never be disobedient, or sulky, or fret and cry, but say, *I will try and be like the blessed Saviour when he was a child*. And as to those of you who are grown up, and have children of your own ; still, if your parents are living, you owe them reverence, love, and obedience. You can never be released from your duty to them, till they die ; and if you are good, you will not desire it. A christian slave will endeavour to be industrious in working his grounds, that, beside honestly maintaining his wife and children, he may have something to give to his poor old father or mother, to comfort them in their last days.

Christ was an example of obedience to rulers. He had many temptations to be disobedient, and to make himself great in this world, by opposing those who were in authority, but he never listened to them. Indeed, his heart was so much set on that other and happier world, (may the Lord bring you all to it !) that he was quite dead to riches and worldly greatness, and chose to

be humble and poor. I have already told you how he said, "Render to the king, the things that are the king's:" And on another occasion, he wrought a miracle to pay what was unjustly demanded of him, by some who said to his disciples, "Doth not your Master pay tribute?" Jesus Christ had one disciple, who was named Peter. Peter was a very warm, hasty man, which was a great fault in him. Afterwards, however, when he got more religion, he was cured of that evil. On the night that Christ was seized, this Peter, without the approbation of Christ, took a sword to defend him. Indeed, when some of his disciples thought of fighting for their Saviour, when he foretold his sufferings; and began to unfold their purpose, saying, "Lord, behold, here are two swords,"—Jesus cut them short, and would not permit them to go on with such unchristian discourse, saying, "It is enough," let me hear no more of this matter. But, notwithstanding this reproof, Peter took a sword with him, and with it "struck off the right ear of the high priest's servant." The blessed Jesus healed his enemy, and rebuked his disciple. He sharply said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into its place; for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword." As though he had said, If you fight, I your Lord and Master will not protect and bless you. Such was the example of Christ; and, after his resurrection, all his disciples imitated him. The wicked Jews rose against the Roman Governors, but our Lord's disciples were so far from supporting their countrymen, that they left their city, and country, and house, and fled to the mountains, and became strangers and pilgrims upon earth. And afterwards, when they wrote letters, which are called *epistles*, to Christians in different places, they told them

to "submit to governors, to honour the king, and to be subject to their masters, with all reverence." Now you must be looking to Jesus as your example. You must do nothing that Christ would not do, if he were in your place. You must obey your masters, and all magistrates and governors, not to get the praise of men, but that you may bring glory to Christ. Some people will say, "A poor slave can do no good in the world!" But I think a Christian slave can do a great deal of good. He cannot preach, he cannot make a book, and get fame as a wise and learned man: But his very station in life gives him an opportunity of setting such an example of Christian submission and obedience, as shall not only benefit his fellow-slaves, but also cause his Redeemer to be glorified in countries that he has never seen, and amongst people that he has never known. O be Christians; be Christians, and you will be every thing that is good.

Christ was an example of universal benevolence. "He went about doing good." This was his only employment, of which he was never weary. He fed the hungry, he healed the sick, he was himself a slave, a servant of the lowest kind, to all the children of men. Christ had no pride, therefore he thought no person, however despised, unworthy of his attention; nor any office of kindness, however mean, beneath his dignity to perform. He could not but do good to all who came to him, because he loved all; (O with what an intense love!) for love is the strongest principle in the world, and *the love of God* is the mightiest kind of love. To do good, was the joy of our Redeemer's heart. And it is still his joy: Nor can I possibly describe the richness and the greatness of those blessings he will bestow upon you, if you only repent of your sins, and seek him by prayer and faith.

Now the apostle says, "Walk in love, as Christ also loved us." And again he gives us this excellent advice, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Are you obedient to this command? Say to your own heart, Have I any anger against any man in the whole world? Do I wish ill to any body, though I cannot do him an injury?—O if you have such a heart, an angry heart, a revengeful heart, you are not yet a Christian. If that heart be not changed before you die, I shall never see you in heaven. The Lord have mercy upon you, and give you a "new heart," for Jesus's sake. You must love every soul of man; parents, wife, children, master, fellow-slaves, countrymen, friends, enemies, the whole world. You must have a great big heart, full of love to all mankind. Live to be blest, and to do good. Love is a Christian's element, and goodness his delight. Christianity is the soul of charity. If a slave have plantains, or yams, or cassada in his grounds, more than his own family wants, and sees his fellow-slave in sickness and necessity, if he be a Christian, he will give him a little of what he can spare, to help him in the time of trouble. Now every one of you must look to Jesus as your example: And shew that you are Christians, not merely by talking of religion, but unceasingly by doing good of every sort to the uttermost of your power. Try to make every one on the estate on which you live, a Christian; and the best method of being successful, is, by leading a steady, uniform, holy Christian life.

As to *suffering ill*, we have a great example in the life of our Saviour. He was meek in all his conduct to-

wards those who did him wrong. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again: When he suffered, he threatened not; but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously." His conduct affords the best explanation of those words spoken in his ministry: "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." We know this is not human nature, but it is Christianity, which is superior to human nature, and makes a man greater than himself. Strive not then with your fellow slaves, nor with any man; but invariably bear, forbear, and forgive. And "keep thy tongue also from evil." As the apostle says, "Let every man be swift to hear, and slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." "The tongue is a very unruly member:" But if you pray for grace to keep you from anger, you will easily govern the tongue. Jesus was always resigned to the will of God. In his deepest agonies he said, "Father! thy will be done." Look unto him, that you may thus become universally resigned to the will of your heavenly Father. It is written in the word of God, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." As these chastenings come from the love of God, let them increase your love to him.

Now if you be looking to Jesus as your Saviour and Example, in the manner already described, you will have no cause to fear either death or the judgment day. You will be enabled with comfort

III. To look unto JESUS AS YOUR JUDGE.

That great day is approaching, when the Lord Jesus

shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire: He will then take vengeance on them that know not God, and that have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." But those who have looked unto him, and who have been saved by him in this life, "shall have boldness in the day of judgment," and "not be ashamed before Christ at his coming." For in truth, in his character as a Judge, he will only be unto them more fully a Saviour. "Looking," says the apostle, "for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ." And again, "To them that look for him he shall appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." See then what a blessed thing it is to be a Christian. A Christian has an eternity of felicity to hope for, and not a moment's misery to fear. Live then according to the commandments of God: And be always waiting for the coming of Christ. Live each moment, as though that moment the "judgment was about to be set, and the books opened." Lo! Eternity is here.

Finally: The exhortation in my text is applicable to all men, and to every state and condition of life.—Wicked men! Look to Jesus! Why should you die, since he has died to save you? O turn to him; and he will bless and not destroy you.—You that sorrow for sin, look to Jesus: He waits to pardon you at this hour. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—Christians! Look unto Jesus. Do not look too much at the professors of religion. Do not stumble at the imperfections discoverable in their character; no, nor yet if they fall into sin. Christ and Christianity are

ever the same, however men may change; look off from man, and look for salvation, and for an example, to the great Redeemer alone. Be looking unto Jesus throughout life, whether in joy or sorrow, in health or sickness, in tribulation or in comfort and peace. Look unto him by faith, as the eye grows dim in death; and you shall "see him standing at the right hand of God," smiling on a poor dying worm, and beckoning you up to his throne. And your happy spirit shall be carried by angels into his blissful presence, "and so shall you be for ever with the Lord." May Jesus save us all, that, with the multitude of the redeemed, we may cry, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be-unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!" Amen! Amen!

FINIS.

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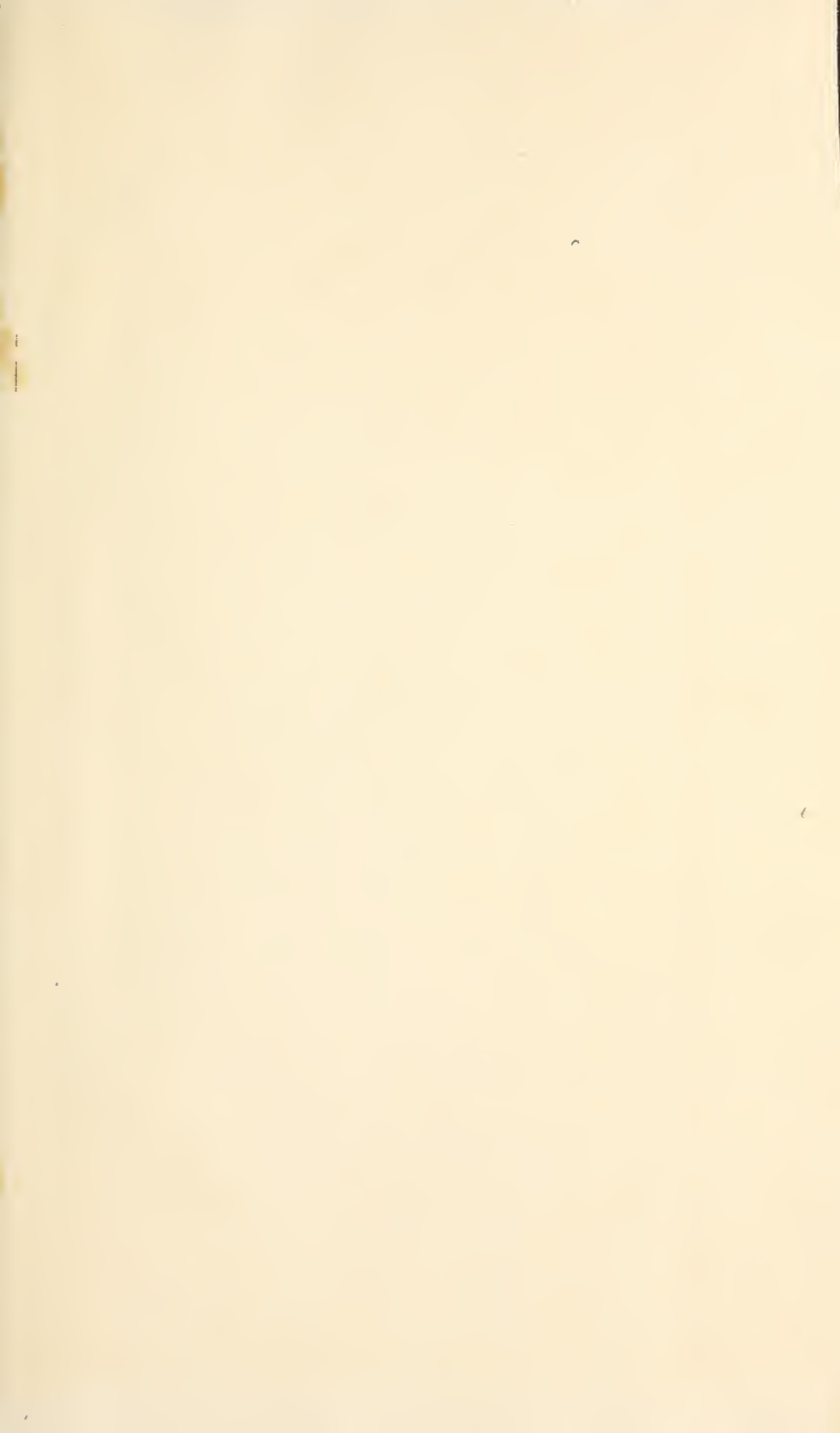
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