

PLANT OF RENOWN,

A

## SERMON,

ON

Ezek. xxxiv. 29:

And I will raise up for them a Plant of  
Renown.

PREACHED AT

A Sacramental Occasion,

AT

*GLENDIVAN.*

About 1738.

BY

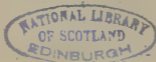
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# S E R M O N .

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Ezek. xxxiv. 29.

And I will raise up for them a Plant  
of Renown.

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If we cast our eyes back upon the foregoing part of this chapter, we shall find a very melancholy scene casting up; we shall find the flock and heritage of God scattered, robbed and peeled by the civil and ecclesiastical Rulers that were in being in that day a day much like to the day wherein we live: the ruin of the church of Christ, in all ages and periods of the world, has been owing to combinations betwixt corrupt churchmen and corrupt statesmen; and so you will find it. In the preceding part of this chapter there is a high charge brought in against the shepherds of Israel, and a terrible and awful threatening denounced by the great and chief

Shepherd against them, for the bad treatment that the flock of Christ had met with in their hands: however the sheep of Christ may be fleeced and scattered, and spoiled, yet the Lord looks on them, and many great and precious promises are made for their encouragement in that evil day, you may read them at your own leisure; for I must not stay upon them just now. But among all the rest of the promises that are made, Christ is the chief, Christ is the toe-lock of the church, whatever trouble she is in. In Isa. vii. the church had a trembling heart, God's Israel was shaken as ever you saw the leaves of the wood shaken by the wind, by reason of two kings combining against them!—Well the Lord tells them, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel. But, might the church say, what is that to us? What encouragement doth it afford in this distress! Why, the Messiah is to come of the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, and therefore that tribe and family must be preserved, in order to the accomplishment of the promise; whatever distance of time suppose hundreds or thousands of years, may intervene before the actual coming of the Messiah; yet the promise of his coming, as it is the ground of your faith for eternal salvation, so is a security for the present, that the enemy shall not prevail, to the total ruin of Judah and the royal family of David. In all the distresses of the church, Christ is always presented to her, in the promise, as the object of her faith, and the

ground of her consolation. And, accordingly, They looked to him, in the promise, and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed. He is here promised under the notion of David, he is promised under the notion of God's servant; and in the words of the text, he is promised as a renowned Plant, that was to rise in the fulness of time. And blessed be God, he has sprung up, and is in heaven already, and has overtopped all his enemies, and all his enemies shall be his footstool.

Here then, you have a comfortable promise of the Messiah, where, again, you may notice the Promiser, 1, I will raise up," &c. It is a great I, indeed; it is Jehovah, in the person of the Father, it was he that, in a peculiar manner, sent him: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the fulness of time, he sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." God promised to send him, and accordingly he has actually fulfilled his promise.—Again, 2ly, We may notice the blessing promised, and that is, a Plant of renown. Christ gets many metaphorical names and descriptions in Scriptures He is called a Rose a Son a Door the Tree of Life, and he is content to be called any thing to make himself known to us, and here he is called a

Plant, and a renowned Plant but more of this afterwards. But then, 3dly, We have the production of this Plant, I will raise him up. He will endeavour to keep him down, the devil and his angels will endeavour to smother him, when he sets his head above ground! So we find Satan sends Herod, and Herod sends the bloody dragoons to murder him when he came into the world; but let hell do its utmost, as it hath done in all ages, and is doing this day, to smother that Plant, up it will be.

I will raise him up, and therefore he shall prosper. But then, again, 4thly, we may notice here, for whom, or for what end, and for whose use and benefit it is. I will raise up for them a plant of renown. Who these are you will see, by casting your eye on the former part of the chapter, it is for the Lord's flock, his oppressed heritage, that are borne down by wicked rulers, civil and ecclesiastic. I will raise up for them a Plant of renown, and he will be their deliverer.

The doctrine that naturally arises from this first clause of the verse, is in short this, "That Christ is a Plant of renown, of God's raising up, for the benefit and advantage of his people, or, for their comfort and relief, in all their distresses."

Now, in discoursing this doctrine, if time and strength would allow, I might premise,

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A few things concerning this blessed plant.

II. I might enquire why he is called a Plant of renown.

III. Speak a little to the raising up of this Plant.

IV. Shew for whom he is raised up.

Consider for what end. And,

Lastly, Apply.

As to the first of these, namely, To premise a few things concerning this blessed plant.

I. I would have you to know what is here attributed and ascribed to Christ. It is not to be understood absolutely of him as God, but officially as Mediator and Redeemer. Considering him absolutely as God, this cannot be properly said of him, that he was raised up after he is God co-equal and co-essential with the Father, but viewing him as Mediator, he is a Plant, as it were, of God's training.

You will see from the context, all that is said of Christ has a respect to him as a Mediator, that he was to be God's servant to do his work, in that consideration he is here called a Plant, and a Plant of renown. Hence Zacharias, when speaking of him, has a phrase much to the same purpose, He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.' Again,

2. Another thing I would have you to remark, is, That this Plant is but small and little in the eyes of a blind world. He was little looked upon, when he sprung in his incarnation, and when he was here in a state of humiliation, men looked upon him, "as a Root sprung up out of a dry ground, they saw no comeliness in him, why he should be desired!" and to this day, though he be in a state of exaltation at the right hand of God, yet he is little thought of, and looked upon by the generality of mankind, and the hearers of the gospel; He is despised and rejected of men. But then,

3. Another thing I would have you to remark, is, That however contemptible this Plant of renown is, in the eyes of a blind world, yet he is the tallest in all God's Labanon, there is not the like of him in it; "He is fairer than the children of men," and, "He is as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood," If ever you see him, ye will be ready to say so too: "When



have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee." Again,

4. Another thing I remark, is, That this blessed Plant of renown was cut down in his death, and sprung up gloriously in his resurrection; the sword of Divine Justice hewed down this blessed plant upon Mount Calvary, but within three days he sprung up again more glorious, and more beautiful, and more amiable than ever, and "He was declared to be the Son of God, with power according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead.

Lastly, I would have you to remark this thing, That all the little plants in the garden are ingrafted in this Plant of renown. I am the Vine, ye are the branches, the man abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, For without me, ye can do nothing.—I am a green fig-tree, from me is this fruit found." If you be not ingrafted, sirs, in this Plant, you will never grow, and all the trees that are not planted in him, they are all but weeds; and there is a time coming, when all the weeds will be plucked up, and therefore take heed that you be ingrafted in him by a faith of God's operation.— So much for the first thing I proposed.

THE second thing was to shew, That He is a renowned Plant. He is renowned in heaven, and he is renowned on earth, and will be so, for 'His name shall endure for ever,' Psal. lxxii. 17. O he is renowned! For what, say you, is he renowned? I might here enter upon a very large field, but I shall only tell you, that he is renowned in his Person. There was never the like of him. The two natures, God and man, are joined together in one, in him! Did you ever see that? If you have not seen that, you have not seen the Mystery of Godliness, He is the most renowned Person in heaven. But he is IMMANUEL, "God manifested in the flesh." Then, he is renowned for his pedigree: "Who can declare his generation?" Considering him as God, his eternal generation from the Father, cannot be told. We can tell you, He is the only-begotten of the Father, but we cannot tell you the manner of his generation, it is a secret that God has drawn a veil over; and it is dangerous to venture into a search of it; and they that have attempted it have commonly been bogged into Arian, Arminian, and Sabellian errors. Considering him as man, he is sprung of a race of ancient kings; a famous catalogue of them you read of in Matth. 1st. And who can declare his generation even as man? For he was born of a virgin, and conceived by the overshadowing power of the Highest.—Then He is renowned for his Name: He hath a Name above every name, that can be named, whether in this world, or in that which is to come.—

He is renowned for his Wisdom, for, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him. He is renowned for his Power, for, he is not only the wisdom of God, but the power of God: He is, "The Man of God's right hand, even the Son of man, whom he hath made strong for him, self." He is renowned for his veracity and fidelity, for, faithfulness is the girdle of his reins, and righteousness the girdle of his loins. Have you got a word from him depend upon it, it is a sicker word, does not fail, the word of the Lord endures for ever, when heaven and earth shall pass away. He is renowned for his Righteousness, for he has brought in an everlasting righteousness, whereby the law is magnified and made honourable, and by the imputation of which, the guilty transgressors are acquitted. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This is his name, The Lord our righteousness. He is renowned for his fulness, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in him. He is full of grace and truth, full of all created and uncreated excellencies—He is renowned for his Love. What but love brought him out of the bosom of the Father to this lower world? What but love made him lay down his life for his people?—He is renowned for his liberality. He has a full hand and free heart, as we use to say. He gives without money; and he invites all to come and share of his fulness.—He is renowned for his constancy. He is Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The

best of men will fail us, when we trust thee, they will run like splinters into our hands, when we lean upon them: but sirs you will find Christ ay the same, "To-day, yesterday, for ever. And then, He is renowned for his authority and dominion. It is great, and extends far and wide whether in heaven above or in the earth beneath; and his dominion reaches from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; and all the kings of the earth are but his vassals. Thus, I say, Christ, in every respect, is renowned.

But here, to keep by the Phraseology of the text, He is a renowned Plant. Wherein is he renowned?

1. He is renowned for his antiquity; "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," &c. All the plants in the higher and lower garden of God, they are but just up-starts in comparison of him. Angels and archangels, and the greatest seraphims are but of yesterday, in comparison of this Plant. He is renowned for his antiquity; for he is the Ancient of days, and the everlasting Father, or the Father of eternity, as it may be rendered, Isa. ix.

2. As he is renowned for his antiquity, so for his beauty; he is the most beautiful plant in all the garden of God. "I am the Rose of Sharon,

and the Lily of the vallies.—He is as the apple tree among the trees of the wood." He is renowned, I say, for his beauty and his glory; for the glory of a God is in him. Is there any glory in his eternal Father? Why, that glory shines in our Immanuel in the very brightness of it. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb 1. 3. Now sirs, If ever your eyes were opened by the spirit of God, to take up the glory of this Plant, his glory has dazzled your very eyes. You say they never saw any glory in him, you never saw him to this very day, pray that the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, may yet shine in your hearts. It would make a heartsome sacrament. if this Plant were displayed in his glory among us. Sirs, have you come to see him in his glory? O give God no rest, till he make a discovery of himself to your souls. Then.

3. He is renowned for his verdure, for his perpetual greenness. Other plants are fading, you and I are fading plants.—All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." He is a Tree ever green; he never fades, summer nor winter, and shall be ever a green Plant to the saints, as it were, to eternity: when millions of ages, yea, myriads of ages, are past in heaven, he will be as fresh and green to the believer as when he first saw him or the first moment the saints entered into glory: and therefore it is, that the songs of the redeemed in glo-

ry, are ay new songs, because they will ay be new songs, because they will ay see matter of a new song; and the more they see, they will more wonder at him through eternity.

4. This Plant is also renowned for his Virtue. We read Rev xxii. that "The leaves of the Tree of Life were for the healing of the nations" That Tree of Life is the very same with this Plant of renown, the leaves of this Plant are for the healing of the nations: and we that are ministers, are come this day to scatter the leaves of this Tree of Life, of this Plant of Renown among you; try if you can get a leaf of it applied and get home upon your souls: depend upon it, there is virtue in every word of his.—Sirs, mingle faith with a word, and you will find it will have the same efficacy with you, as it had with the poor woman with the bloody issue, was healed with a touch of the hem of his garment who had spent all her living on doctors. O see if ye can find him! I assure you he is here; he is knocking at the door of every man's heart: Behold I stand (says he) at the door and knock, If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. And O let him in, there is virtue in him for curing you all: though there were ten thousand millions of you more than there are, there is virtue in him for healing you all.

5. This blessed Plant is likewise renowned for his fertility. He is not a barren Plant, he would not be renowned if he were barren. He brings forth all manner of fruit every month; yea, I may add, every day, every moment. You read in Rev. xxii of the tree of life, that brings forth twelve manner of fruits every month; that is to say, he brings forth all fruit that is necessary for a poor soul. Whatever thy soul stands in need of, is to be found in him. see then and gather, see if you can gather some of it. There is the fruit of his incarnation. There is the fruit of his death. There is the fruit of his intercession, and sitting on the right hand of God. There is the fruit of his prophetic office. There is the fruit of his kingly office. There is the fruit of his appearing within the veil. There is the fruit of what he did without the veil, and without the camp. O what fruit is here! Here is wisdom for fools; justification for the condemned soul; sanctification for the polluted soul; clothing for the naked; riches for the poor, bread for the hungry, drink for the thirsty. All manner of fruit is here, and we are trying, sirs, to shake the Tree of Life among you; and blessed be God, they may be gathered. O sirs! they are dropping among you; O gather, gather, for salvation is in every word that drops from him, his words are the words of eternal life. But,

6. This Plant is renowned for his scent and pleasant savour. O sirs, there is such a blessed

savour in this Plant of renown, as has cast a perfume through all the Paradise above, and the church militant below, which is called, 'Gød's vineyard,' Isa. v. O sirs! do ye find any thing of the scent of this Plant?—I can tell you, if ever you have been favoured with a smell of it, you have been made to cry out, "Because of the savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." The believer find a scent about him, he draws a savour from him. What is the design of us ministers, but to cast abroad his scent, And it is by this we win souls. They that cast out, and drop the Plant of renown out of their sermons, no wonder their sermons stink; and they shall stink through eternity, that throw Christ out of their sermons. The great business of ministers is to cast forth the scent of Christ to people. I shall read you to this purpose, it is, 1 Cor. ii 14,—16. "Now, thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ. And maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish, To the one, we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other, the savour of life unto life, and who is sufficient for these things." Who is able to tell the sweet savour that is in him. But,

7. This blessed Plant is renowned for his shadow, Song ii. 3. "I sat down under his



shadow with great delight." The shadow of the Plant of renown. You are all sitting or standing there; but are you sitting under the Plant of renown, Jonah's gourd, that did him service against the scorching heat of the sun, that was like to take away his life, alas! soon failed him; for God sent a worm and smote it, that it withered. So the worm of death will soon smite and wither you and me. O get in under the shadow of this Plant of renown, and ye are secured against death and vindictive wrath for ever. Get in under his shadow, the shadow of intercession, the shadow of his power, the shadow of his providence, the shadow of his faithfulness. O sit down under his shadow, and you will find shelter there against all deadly. Whatever blasts come you will find safety there. Would you be shadowed from the fear of death, the king of terrors to many! O, if you would be shadowed against the awful terrors of death and God's vengeance, get under this shadow, and you are safe.

7. This Plant is renowned for his stature. He is a high Plant, he is a tall Plant. You see the heavens above you, which are very high, but these are but creeping things in comparison of this glorious Plant, who is, "The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity," "You can never see his height: your eye will look high and your thought will reach higher, but neither your eye, nor thought, will reach unto him, He

is taller than any of the cedars in God's Lebanon, Eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to think of the height and glory of this Plant of renown.

Lastly, This Plant is renowned for his extent. He is not only a high, but he is also a broad Plant. He was planted in the first promise in Paradise; he spread through the Old Testament church; he came the length of filling the land of Judea; and at length this Plant has spread among us. And O that I could spread him among you, and open the leaves of this Plant, to take you in: He is a broad Plant, he will serve you all. We read of the Tree of life being on every side of the river. There is a great river betwixt us and heaven, and that is death; and we are all running to this river of death. As one well observes on the place, this Tree is in the middle of the river. He is on this side of time, and he is on that side of time. Now, this Plant is on both sides of the river. Though you were going to the wastes of America, you will find him there as well as here, if you have but the art of improving him. And this Plant will spread himself through all kingdoms. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, just as the waters cover the Sea." He will not only fill the earth, but the whole heavens throughout eternity. O! he is a broad Plant, that will extend himself both to heaven

nd earth! This shall serve for the second thing proposed, viz. To shew, that this Plant is indeed a renowned Plant.

The third thing I proposed, in the prosecution of this doctrine, was concerning the raising or upbringing of this Plant. You see it is no other than the great God, that raised up this Plant. We find the great Jehovah glorying in his skill and wisdom, in raising up this Plant for the use of the church, Psal. lxxxix. 19. Says the Lord here, I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people; I have raised up David, my servant; with the holy oil have I anointed him." You see he just glories in it, that he had raised up this glorious Plant of renown. I will tell you a few things with reference to the raising up of this blessed Plant.

He was raised up in the counsel of God's peace from eternity. The Trinity sat in council anent the upbringing of him; 'The counsel of peace was between them both,' Zech. vi. 13.—The Father and the Son agreed upon it, that in the fulness of time the Son should come into the world. But then, again,

2. He was raised up in the first promise to

Adam and Eve. Till this Plant was discovered to them, they were like to run distracted. And indeed, sirs, if Christless sinners saw where they were, and the wrath of God that is hanging over their heads, they would be ready to run distracted, till a revelation of Christ was made to them. All the promises prophecies, types, and doctrines, of the Old Testament, were the gradual springings of this Plant, until,

3. His actual manifestation in the flesh, when, in the fulness of time, he appeared. I might here mention many things which time will not at present permit, and therefore shall only observe, that this glorious plant was also raised up even in his death, at his resurrection, in his ascension into heaven, when he was set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, after he had by himself purged our sins.

And, Lastly,

He is raised up in the revelation of the everlasting gospel. And thus we are endeavouring to raise him up in the word and sacrament this day. As Moses lifted

up the serpent in the wilderness, so we  
are endeavouring to lift up the plant of  
renown, ' That whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have everlasting life.  
Amen.

# H Y M N S.

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LET heav'n arise, let earth appear;  
Said the Almighty Lord;  
The heav'n arose, the earth appear'd,  
At his creating word.

Thick darkness brooded o'er the deep,  
God said, "Let there be light;"  
The light shone forth with smiling ray,  
And scattered ancient night.

He bade the clouds ascend on high;  
The clouds ascend, and bear  
A wat'ry treasure to the sky,  
And float upon the air.  
The liquid element below  
Was gathered by his hand;  
The rolling seas together flow,  
And leave the solid land.

With herbs, and plants, and fruitful trees,  
The new-formed globe he crown'd;  
Ere there was rain to bless the soil,  
Or sun to warm the ground.

Then high in heav'n's resplendent arch  
He plac'd two orbs of light,  
He set the sun to rule the day,  
The moon to rule the night.

Next, from the deep th' Almighty King,  
Did vital beings frame;  
Fowls of the air of every wing,  
And fish of every name,  
To all the various brutal tribes,  
He gave their wondrous birth;  
At once the lion and the worm  
Sprung from the teeming earth.

Then, chief o'er all his works below,  
At last was Adam made;  
His Maker's image bless'd his soul,  
And glory crown'd his head.  
Fair in th' Almighty Maker's eye,  
The whole creation stood.  
He view'd the fabrick he had rais'd;  
His word pronounced it good.

NAKED as from the earth we came,  
And enter'd life at first;  
Naked we to the earth return,  
And mix with kindred dust.  
Whate'er we fondly call our own,  
Belongs to heav'n's great Lord;  
The blessings lent us for a day  
Are soon to be restored.

'Tis God that lifts our comforts high,  
Or sinks them in the grave;  
He gives; and, when he takes away,  
He takes but what he gave.  
Then, ever blessed be his name,  
His goodness swell'd our store;  
His justice but resumes its own;  
'Tis ours still to adore.

F I N I S.