

**THE
MAJESTY AND CONDESCENSION OF GOD.**

**A
S E R M O N,**

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

IN

PORT REPUBLIC;

ON

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1812.

Published by the Request of the Congregation.

S T A U N T O N :

PRINTED BY ISAAC COLLETT.

Price eighteen and three fourths cents.

TO
THE REV. A. B. DAVIDSON;

T H I S S E R M O N

I S

INSCRIBED;

A S

TESTIMONY

O F

AFFECTIONATE ESTEEM;

B Y

GEORGE BOURNE.

A S E R M O N.

II. CHRONICLES, VI. 18.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee! how much less this house which I have built!

“ I HEAR a great voice from heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” This is the natal day of the Redeemer of mankind. During all ages the universal church has commemorated the period when “the angel of the Lord came upon the shepherds, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.” The seraph still fills the arched concave of heaven through all its immensity with the “glad tidings of great joy to all people, that unto us is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.” Accompanying Gabriel’s voice, the multitude of the celestial host continue to exhilarate our hearts with the triumphant chorus, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men:” for this morning descends to “dwell on the earth, Emmanuel” That Jesus though veiled in the robes of mortality was the brightness of his Father’s glory and the express image of his person, is evident from the pre-eminent characteristics by which he is known, the ineffably splendid works which he performed, and the divine attributes with which he was clothed. The wisdom of his instructions yet illumines man, notwithstanding all the efforts of diabolical malice to extinguish it—the energy of his grace now displays its potent influence, although indwelling corruption, satanic delusion, and atheistic obstinacy, have combined to repel its sway—and the anticipations of that life and immortality which he

brought to light, "Christ in you the hope of glory," are here experienced, to evince that neither Pagan persecution, Mahomedan apostacy, Jewish impenitence, Roman superstition, nor even our own infirmity can retard his purpose, invalidate his promise, or interrupt the communication of his mercy.

"God manifest in the flesh, over all, blessed forever," who deigned to declare himself present with his disciples to the end of the world, is as certainly in the midst of us, as he was twenty-eight hundred years since enveloped in the cloud, the glory of which filled that matchless structure which Solomon dedicated for the record of his name. This assembly must attract the peculiar regard of the Great Head of the Church, insure a Saviour's beneficence, and awaken our sensibility. Your everlasting destiny may in this house be determined: for to Jesus and his worship, the temple which we have erected is at length devoted; these walls of clay have resounded with songs of Redemption; through this roof our united implorations for spiritual blessings have ascended; and this pulpit now proclaims Messiah's glorious gospel. Therefore, to him "who heareth prayer," our unanimous petition should be addressed, "O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity!"

"But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee! how much less this house which I have built?"

This august and consolatory apostrophe, *asserts the Majesty, and exemplifies the condescension of Jehovah.*

I. *The Majesty of God is asserted.* "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee!"*

* The following passage was omitted when the sermon was delivered. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him." The existence of Deity may be demonstrated independent of Revelation. That perfection governs the universe cannot be doubted, if we advert to the propagation of animals. Did necessity or mechanical laws direct this process—the same number of males and females would be successively generated; or did it

1. God is infinitely immense. “Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee!”—The existence of God being in his own nature, and of his essence involves the eternity of his duration. From these properties flow his exemption from restraint and his illimitable infinity; for if he could be confined, he would be dependent, and if his presence was from any situation excluded, it might be justly inferred, that no supreme Being existed.

depend upon a fortuitous combination of atoms, it is almost impossible that through eternal ages, animals of a certain kind would not have been either all male or all female, and the species have become extinct: but these cases have never occurred—hence their Ruler is absolutely supreme. Examine the growth of vegetables: the superb oak and the creeping ivy: the beautiful rose and the lovely violet can be produced from seed or slips alone—but the existence of the tree implies the prior seed, which must have been derived from the parent plant. Infidelity, we insist that thou develope which was first, the oak or the acorn; for experience certifies that the earth never ejects seed without a tree, and that plants never issue but from seed. The fool is dumb—therefore a superior formed the first seed or tree, planted it in the earth, and imparted to it vegetative power. Scrutinize the laws of attraction and repulsion: of the most solid body few particles are in actual contact, and between those of the elastic fluids interstices are obvious: but we can neither conceive of force without substance, nor that a being can operate where it is not present; yet this is an exertion of strength without material intervention. Scepticism, unfold these laws, declare, why the matter of gold coheres, and that of air repels? Speak; he also is silent—therefore this spiritual energy is the arm of the Lord of Hosts. Meditate upon the specific gravity of bodies: portions of matter of identical bulk are unequally heavy—the same quantity of it is not contained in similar dimensions—hence all space cannot be replete with it—consequently it can neither be essential nor infinitely extended; for that which is necessary must every where be homogeneous. Unbelief, disclose the source of life—

Intelligence, activity, immortality and unchangeableness belong to the spirituality of the Godhead and prove his immensity. Neither the immeasurable expanse which we behold, extensive beyond the utmost stretch of human capacity, nor the interminable space which is concealed from our vision, can limit his abode, circumscribe the manifestation of his energy or surpass the never ending display of his divine excellence.

2. God is inscrutably omniscient. "Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men!" The knowledge of him who saw Nathaniel under the fig-tree, includes the whole compass of creation. No bounds of possibility can exceed Almighty power; no truth can evade the reach of infinite understanding; and the most concealed motions must be known to God; because every thing is his work, and is preserved by his omnipotent word. This acquaintance with the objects which he has formed, cannot like our insight into them be narrow, superficial and inadequate; but must extend to the most latent springs

matter is not self-existent—it cannot be eternal—he too is speechless—therefore in God we live and move and have our being. Review the absurdity of an endless series of effects. Trace it in subordination; an antecedent must necessarily exist: for a sequence in which one thing depends upon another to an infinite extent irresistibly demands some independent agent from which all originally proceed. The shortest chain would fall if not held in its position by something able to bear it; but if its links were innumerable it must be sustained by proportional ability; nevertheless by the atomical hypothesis we should absurdly believe that while a light chain requires something to carry it, another unboundedly ponderous will support itself. If there be no commensurate power which caused and which moves the universe—Atheism, reveal the beginning of all sensitive and intelligent entity, or at least the origin of their ever varying phenomena? He is blind, deaf and dumb—therefore—this majestic supremacy is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the "God who in very deed dwells with men on the earth."

of all their operations. The supreme mind is altogether free from infirmity and imperfection: all the connections, differences, and relations of inferior things are perceived without uncertainty, obscurity or confusion; and they produce no perplexity, forgetfulness or embarrassment. Every action of moral agents is also viewed by the all seeing eye of God: not the exterior alone, but the fleeting thought, the half resolved purpose, the immediately forgotten crime, and the stifled oath escape not his penetration. "He searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men;" who are his offspring and under his immediate controul. The active energies of rational creatures with their unnumbered exertions are as extensively distinguished by him as the passive powers of matter with its modifications; this attribute being essential to a wise universal Governor, and to a righteous infallible Judge. Prescience, the foreknowledge of events yet future, is also comprised in the omniscience of Divinity. As Jehovah is omnipresent, nothing can be transacted without his notice, and the foundations of his knowledge being immutable; all creatures, including every act of rational beings, during the whole period of their lives must be at once discerned.

He fills his own immortal Now !

If nature and Providence be the result of design, all the effects which would flow from them, with their exercises and productions must have been open to him who proposed a certain object in their primitive arrangement. The honour of his Majesty, and his moral perfections are deeply concerned in the distribution of rewards and punishments—but this part of his government could never be administered upon stable or equitable principles, did the Lord not previously know all the consequences of the changing intricate movements of man. To disbelieve the boundless infallibility of divine prescience, destroys the glory of his absolute supremacy, impeaches the consummation of his wisdom, and shakes the invariableness of his counsel. But foreknowledge neither influences nor alters the nature of things; because we ourselves feel all the liberty which is requisite either for

the purposes of morality or the obligations of responsibility: and this experience is the sole cause of individual approbation or condemnation. The attributes, Self Existence, Eternity, Ubiquity and Omnipotence as highly exceed our finite minds, as that Omniscience which encircles future contingencies--yet to deny them is to plunge into the tangible darkness of the Atheistical abyss. "Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven what canst thou do? deeper than hell what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the ocean."

3. God is incomparably perfect. "There is no God like thee in the heaven nor in the earth." All the splendors of the Deity equally and most brilliantly shine in the wonders of his hands, the skilful combinations of his superintending influence, and in the death destroying spirit of evangelical principles: and the "beginning of the creation of God" has graciously condescended so lucidly to exhibit the infinitude of his power, wisdom and goodness to us, that if this fail, nothing additional can possibly convince the mind or affect the heart.

The perfection of godlike energy is displayed in the ever varying magnificence of created phenomena. From the luminous orb of day, a mass of matter of bulk incalculable, through all gradations to the minutest particle cognizable by mortal eye with microscopic aid, an omnific arm is most clearly exhibited. The worlds which lie beyond the grasp of our sight, defy in number and distance not arithmetic only, but all mental comprehension. To this astonishing prospect, add the countless millions of inhabitants which people those globes, and they will undoubtedly appear to be the labour of an Infinite Architect. But the scenes in which we are engaged, the variegations and endless appearances of nature, the different tribes of animals, the marvellous instincts of brutes, birds, fishes and insects regular in directing them to secure that which is best, where neither sense nor reason guides them, and the multifarious inventions of men, all unequivocally assert the interposition of an Almighty Creator. While these wonders attract and

surprise us—the magnifying glass discloses in the minutiae of matter, new specimens of omnipotence, unknown classes of animated creatures, and ingenuity with a novelty of construction, that overwhelms our minds with inexpressible rapture. We are lost in the unlimited expanse, and confounded in the most diminutive atom. The beginning, the end, the least and the greatest all baffle us: as we prosecute our inquiries, new amazement is continually excited; and indefinitely more remains which will ever elude our most eager research, escape our most vigorous pursuit, and surpass our deepest penetration. Man in more interesting language proclaims the illimitable power of the Holy One of Israel. Our frame is unequalled in mechanical contrivance, and superior to all terrene existence in its adaptation to the beneficial intention for which it was formed. Evil doubtless is perceptible; but it is not the object of design: no human organization calculated to produce disease has hitherto been discovered: in explaining our system, we say not, this is to irritate or that to inflame: and no man ever suspected that any part of his body was created solely to incommode, annoy and torment. Had the Lord designed our misery, our senses, instead of administering gratification, would have been painful; every taste bitterness, all the objects of sight loathsome; every touch a sting, every smell fetid, and every sound discordant. View the situation of man in the universe; united to the corporeal world by a material frame, participating in external objects—and possessed of spiritual powers elevating him to higher fruition, the pleasures of virtue and the favour of God. Faculties, instincts and affections fitted for all necessary purposes, are implanted within us; and while the appetites determine us to employ the means which preserve natural life—our solicitations and desires for futurity in connection with that paucity of attainments in knowledge and enjoyment of which we feel capable, presage that we shall dwell in a state eternal. Hence whether we contemplate the origin, disposition, preservation or management of all things in heaven and below—whether we survey the unconfined circle of space in which innumerable myriads of orbs

float in ether, or the superb beauties of our own globe, or the wondrous structure of man—whether we behold God creating from nonentity those splendid proofs of his might, or transforming chaos into harmonic order, or destining man the chief in one world, that he may be transferred at the close of his period of probation to “joy unspeakable and full of glory”—we must without hesitation declare that incomparable perfection is the character of the Most High.

God is peerless and august in the stupendous and unexampled wisdom of Providential distributions. Providence is the unsearchable sapience, the unalterable rectitude, the impartial justice and the immense benignity of the divine nature, displayed in the administration of universal empire; with that control, by the influence of which our world answers the grand designs of Jehovah’s government; that regulate and dispose all things; and from the laws of which no creature can be exempt. His knowledge extends to all transactions; his presence is identical in every part of creation; his potency is restrained by no limit; and his activity knows not cessation. That which had a beginning may have an end, hence the same energy is indispensable to preserve as to create the earth. To admit its original, and to deny the particular providence of the “blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords” affirms this palpable contradiction;—that a sphere which cannot independently exist during one moment, may of itself perpetually endure. The cohesion of the parts of matter and their repulsive power demonstrate an immediate immaterial agency; and the varied motions by which animals grow and decay, by which day and night, summer and winter alternately follow cannot be accounted for by any merely mechanical laws and necessarily imply the ceaseless ascendancy of spiritual intelligence. The universe is one magnificent machine, all the parts of which move in methodical harmony: the courses of the solar system; the modes by which vegetables live and flourish; the form of animals with their varied abilities, capacities and instincts; and even the rules of human progression, prove that laws exist which all mundane

adjuncts must obey. Nature is not left in confusion ; order is ever manifested ; and though all the departments of our globe constantly change, the scheme of Providence is gradually completed. The general persuasion of this truth, received from primeval instruction ; every temple erected, every altar dedicated, every prayer addressed and every sacrifice immolated to the God of Bethel, presuppose his permanent interposition in the affairs of man ; and in the solemnity of the oath, we directly appeal to the Judge of quick and dead as a present Auditor and Disposer of terrestrial concerns. As the First and the Last foresees our actions, men are introduced upon the scene in those times and stations, that their conduct shall coincide with the great end of their formation ; and the mind being secretly impressed either by the Spirit of truth or by angelic intervention, the most important matters indubitably occur. But this restraint neither destroys our moral character, nor renders our rational faculties useless, nor makes the Refiner and Purifier the author of evil, or the tempter to vice and immorality. Revelation peremptorily decides ; that with respect to the Sun of Righteousness, no possible event can be fortuitous or accidental ; that Messiah's Kingdom is boundless in extension ; that the celestial orders are without intermission devoted to the affairs of his Providence ; and that "the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity" is incessantly attentive to every sublunary transaction. "No sparrow falls to the ground without your Father— the hairs of your head are all numbered—and the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

The invulnerable argument in support of Christianity which is drawn from prophecy, loses all its force, if this doctrine be expunged ; and the divinity of our most holy religion cannot be verified without the plenary adoption of this article of theological faith. Who displayed before Noah's eyes the subsequent servitude of Canaan's posterity ? "The everlasting Father." Who enabled dying Israel to narrate the Jewish history during fifteen hundred years, long before any prospect existed that his family would become a nation ? "The Lord God of

Shem." Who shewed Moses the destruction of Zion by the Romans, when the Jews were wandering in the wilderness, and seven hundred years antecedent to the foundation of the Roman name? "I am that I am, who dwelt in the bush." Who combined all the wondrous events in the life of David, "to raise him from the sheep fold that he might govern his people? The Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." Who declared that "Cyrus should rebuild Jerusalem, and relay the basis of the temple;" who described his memorable acts six score years previous to his birth? "The faithful and true Witness." By whose "determinate counsel and fore-knowledge was Jesus of Nazareth delivered into wicked hands to be crucified and slain? God's." Who taught "John in the isle of Patmos" the state of the world "until the new heavens and a new Tirzah shall appear? The first begotten of the dead, the prince of the Kings of the earth. Who makes all things work together for good to them that love God? He who spared not his own Son. Who will hereafter teach us, that which we know not now?" Jesus Christ, the ever blessed Redeemer. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

The apostolic declaration, "all things work together for good to them who love God," implies that Divine Providence directs the most minute operations, and so disposes them that they all unite to accomplish his designs. The horrors of hostility, the blessings of quietude, the revolutions of empires, the regulation of nations, the government of individuals, the changes of our situation, the places of our abode and our particular occupations were all known to the Ancient of days before the beginning of creation. Men of contrary dispositions, opposite tempers, separated by distance, disunited in object agree to further the purpose of the Invisible Lawgiver: war and peace, prosperity and adversity execute the commands of our "Governor, the Strength of Israel:" and history preserves numberless instances, in which, after

difficulties have been unravelled, the coincidence and remarkable connection of the diversified occurrences have excited our admiration, convinced us of their propriety, and justified the unspeakable wisdom of the Father of Lights. The life of Joseph is a most splendid evidence of this verity: Had he not dreamed, had his brothers not hated him, had his Father not loved him more than his brethren, had the Ishmaelites not passed by at the moment, had Potiphar not purchased him, had Potiphar's wife not been smitten with his graces, had the Butler not communicated his vision in the prison, had Pharaoh not been troubled in his slumbers, had the septennial famine not happened, or had Jacob not sent his sons into Egypt for grain, the mystery of salvation would have been void and the human family left to perish in their sins, "without hope and without God in the world." "The days of the years of his pilgrimage" are a chain of extraordinary incidents; remove one of the links, and the mediation for our guilty race is destroyed. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Ruth, Samuel, David, Peter, Paul and a cloud of witnesses demonstrate that the most surprising effects often depend upon apparently the most trifling cause: and universal experience testifies that every terrene affair is controlled by God, and that all the movements of the whole compass of created existence combine to perform his will, that his glory may be promoted in the welfare of man. Pharaoh's tyranny, the barbarities of Antiochus, Herod's cruelty, Jewish rage, Pilate's injustice, and the persecutions of Heathen Rome, insuperably evince the superintendency of "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty, who makes the wrath of man to praise him," and confirm the supernal inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, which have survived without earthly assistance every attempt to exterminate their authority. It is the word of the Wonderful, Counsellor. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! God is incomparably perfect in the ineffable and endless munificence of Redemption. Man

is naturally alienated from his Creator, and prone to evil: continuing in this state every thought, word and action discover the depraved source from which he sprung; convict him of disobedience to a righteous mandate; and assure him of its tremendous punishment. To remove this curse, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ accepted his own Son's death as a full expiation for the enormous mass of our criminality; and promised a supply of grace which should be effectual to secure and impart mercy to vindicate the impeccable purity of his character, to satisfy his rectitude, to display him "just and the justifier" of the ungodly who should believe in Jesus, to cleanse "from all unrighteousness," to extinguish the love of sin in the heart, and to implant the imperishable root of holiness which nothing should ever after eradicate. Hence the Messenger of Propitiation has in every generation exhibited the most astonishing proofs of his affectionate regard. Free as the air, active as light, boundless as his nature, and eternal as his duration—its omnipotent energies have been manifested in situations the most hopeless and irremediable. To dead Adam it unveiled life; to condemned David it afforded forgiveness and peace; to imprisoned Manasseh it unlocked the door of deliverance; to possessed Magdalen it declared escape and safety; to backsliding Peter it looked celestial love; and to Paul chief of sinners, the mellifluous voice proclaimed, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save thee." Gospel Redemption is proper in all cases, adapted to all necessities, superabundant in every extremity, and indispensable to each of Adam's descendants. To the guilty, it is pardon; to the iniquitous, justification; to the ignorant, light; to the unholy, sanctification; and to the heirs of hell, it is admission to the beatific vision of Heaven. Its transforming potency is unparalleled in historic record. Grace divine experienced in the soul, transmutes every mental faculty, all the bodily abilities, and every affection of the heart; illumines the blindest understanding; bends the most obstinate judgment; purifies and elevates the most corrupt desires; and by it, indolence, inactivity, thoughtlessness and obduracy are exchanged for diligence, fervour, seriousness and a ten-

der conscience. Influenced by its sway, governed by its precepts, impelled by its obligations, and animated by its prospects—David murdered no more—Manasseh ever “knew his God”—Peter repeated not his “denial of the Lord who bought him”—Paul “joyfully suffered multiplied crosses and tortures”—Zaccheus restored the fruit of his perjury and thefts—The hard-hearted Philippian jailor felt lamblike mildness—and the “Corinthian fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God.” Similar effects are still produced by it ; chastity is substituted for uncleanness ; devotion to the Friend of sinners banishes love of the world ; injustice is bartered for honesty ; callous insensibility yields to generous philanthropy ; sobriety reigns where intemperance wallowed ; and Christian charity destroys the slanderer’s tongue. But the Anointed’s glories are inexplicably more august, if we contemplate them in connection with our indestructible continuance. To the subjects of his government, the jaws of hell are closed, in them the sense of guilt is extinct, pardon of sin certified, peace of conscience established, dread of death removed, terror of the grave vanished, and the shinings of God’s countenance realized. Their progress through the vale of life is marked by grace daily strengthening, corruption gradually dying, progressively increasing knowledge, and by more vivid anticipations of a future blissful immortality. They exchange worlds in consummate peace and triumph ; all their enemies are subdued ; their numberless trials are ended ; their souls are conducted by ministering angels to the throne of the Son of man ; and they enter that imperceptible state which is dignified by the presence of the Bright and Morning Star ; ennobled by the company of Cherubin, Seraphin, Archangels, Angels, and the Spirits of the Just made perfect ; hallowed by disjunction from all evil ; and consecrated by the irreversible decree of the Lord God of the Holy prophets, the abode of immutable, inconceivable felicity, inexhaustible and everlasting.

4. He is a God of unimpeachable veracity. “Thou

"hast kept with thy servant David my father, that which
 "thou hast promised him, and spakest with thy mouth,
 "and hast fulfilled it with thine hand." "Heaven and
 "earth shall pass away, but his words shall not pass a-
 "way." Has one event foretold, subsequently failed?
 Has any promise of mercy not been fulfilled? Was not
 Israel's posterity settled in the land allotted to Abraham?
 Did not the Lord remember his covenant when Gideon's
 three hundred unarmed troops vanquished the "Midia-
 nites numerous as the grass hoppers for multitude?"
 Where was the strength of Israel when David's sling
 slew accoutred Goliath? Did the Leader forget his sacred
 assertion when Zerah's army of a million Ethiopians fled
 and were totally discomfited before Asa's cry? Was fa-
 tistical caution defective when Micaiah solemnly assured
 Ahab that Jehovah had permitted a lying spirit to seduce
 his servants, and that if his ambition urged him "to go
 to Ramoth Gilead," he would be slain? Was not the
 truth of the divine declaration irreproachable, when after
 Jehoshaphat's prayer to the "Lord God of our Fathers
 in heaven," for defence from the overwhelming hosts who
 allied against Judea, Jahaziel commanded him "neither
 to fight, nor fear, nor be dismayed, but to stand still that
 he and his army might see the salvation of God;" and
 they beheld their enemies massacre each other with a
 merciless destruction so complete that not one of them
 escaped? Did the Lord God of Elijah neglect to hear,
 when his servant called for the descent of drought, or
 rain, or fire? Did the "seed of Jacob seek his face in vain"
 when in answer to Hezekiah's supplication, "Senache-
 rib's army fell dead corpses before the angel?" At the
 close of the Chaldean captivity, did the Jews not return;
 according to Isaiah's prediction, under the auspices of
 Cyrus, to the land of their forefathers? Is Babylon at
 this period, in contradiction to its "burden promulgated
 by the son of Amoz," inhabited—has it been dwelt in
 during nearly sixty generations—"do the Arabians pitch
 "their tents, or do the shepherds there make their folds?"
 No—but "wild beasts of the desert lie there, the houses
 "are full of doleful creatures, owls dwell and satyrs
 "therein dance; the wild beasts of the islands cry in the

“ desolate houses, and dragons in the pleasant palaces ;” and even the situation of a city, the walls of which were sixty miles in extent cannot with any pretension to exactitude be now ascertained. Have not Daniel’s prophecies been so precisely verified that infidelity to evade the force of truth, in opposition to his own convictions, preposterously declares the Seer’s writings are a narrative of previous events ? Did not the Plant of Renown embody the fulfilment of a succession of vaticinations which had been accumulating during nearly four thousand years ? Was not his active life from the marriage at Cana, until he said to the thief. “ this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise,” one continued manifestation alone that he will perform the promises which the Gospel reveals ? Contrary to his declarations, do the Jews cultivate the land to which they are so enthusiastically attached ? Are not the scattered predictions of millennial glory so visibly developing that cecity itself can almost discern the application of intricate scriptures to present occurrences ? Has not the Desire of all Nations constantly received the repenting prodigal, exhilarated weeping Mary, saved the expiring malefactor, heard the voice of prayer, bestowed “ his unspeakable gift” upon all who perceived their need of him, rescued from the “ wrath to come” the most incorrigible sinners, and admitted to pardon, acceptance and eternal bliss countless myriads of “ prisoners of hope; who fled to the strong hold, and for refuge to the sanctuary ?” He is “ the same yesterday, to day and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

This immensity, omniscience, veracity and perfection, we should magnify and adore : “ Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders !” But if we feel reverential awe while meditating upon his majesty ; fervid and sublime rapture will be experienced when we contemplate his inexpressible condescension “ Behold, Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ! and will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth, in this house which we have built !”

II. The condescension of God is exemplified. “ God

will in very deed dwell with men on the earth, and in this house which we have built !”

The Horn of salvation assumed corporeity, and made our nature his temple. So luminous was the constellation of excellencies which shone in him, that his slanderers declared “never man spake like him,” his persecutors asserted, “that he did all things well,” and his murderers testified, “that he was certainly righteous.” Viewed in the splendour of Messiah’s character man is a dignified creature, and the History of the Root and Offspring of David proves both the dreadful degradation in which the first transgression plunged us, and the high rank in creation to which we might have attained. But “glory to God in the highest !”

*“ In him the tribes of Adam boast,
More blessings than their mother lost.”*

Subjection to the devil is rejected for obedience to the Father of Eternity, the loss of the Paradisiacal image is replaced by the “likeness of Christ’s glorious body,” and the death to which we were doomed “shall be swallowed up in victory,” when “he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

1. But “God dwells with men on the earth” in a more intimate sense. His residence is with us not as he was displayed in the person of Emmanuel, but by a spiritual union with those who “believe in Jesus.” Ye are the temples of God : your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, said Paul to the Corinthians : and the Amen’s address to the angel of the church of the Laodecians, corroborates this truth, “I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.” “Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.” With whom does the Lord thus condescend to dwell ? “To this man will I look, even to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” With sinners of the human race, who have repented of their iniquity, discarded the bondage of corruption, and trusted in the Shepherd to the redemption of the soul : who have been “justified by grace, washed in the regeneration, and renewed in the Holy Ghost, that they might be

made heirs according to the hope of eternal life: whose affections are set on things above, whose conversation is in heaven as becometh the Gospel, and the mind in whom, is that which was also in Christ Jesus: who work out their salvation with fear and trembling, press towards the mark for the prize of their high calling, walk worthy of their vocation, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and unto whom Shiloh is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.”

The inhabitation of the day's man with the purchase of his blood, and our fellowship with the True Vine involve all the dignity, peace, and security of the redeemed. This exemplification of the stupendous condescension of the Ruler in Israel, refines and enriches his disciples while it effectually guarantees their eventual possession of the unsearchable inheritance: for in this endeared communion, they enjoy familiarity of access, to their surety intimacy of intercourse with their Teacher, the manifestation of the Testator's love, and an identity of interest which ever insures the protection and favour of their rock the God of Jesurun.

Persons who reside in the same house, approach each other with less ceremony than those who are separated by distance, difference in rank, or competition; and of all possible acquaintance that between parents and children, when tenderness, duty and attachment unite them, is the most easy and delightful. The Christian's admission to the Beloved is precisely similar. Through the mercy which flows from the cross, every abomination to our King being determin'd, we are authorised to converse with him as our Bishop, and to enter his presence with the exhilaration and freedom of obedient sons, who experience paternal affection, and who feel every filial obligation. To him they are allowed to declare their necessities, to offer their implorations, to express their gratitude, to divulge those exercises of mind which are impenetrably concealed from other friends, and from him to request direction in their various difficulties. No state interdicts their conversation, at all hours their communications are reasonable, and the more confidently we address the Golden Altar, if veneration regulate our lan-

guage, the more acceptable will be our application. "He who spared not his own son, but delivered him for us, will with him freely give us all things." The exhibitions of his parental regard know no pause: they are unceasing as our dependence, diversified as our wants, and prolonged as our existence. That which Infinite Wisdom perceives to be needful to us, will be without cessation abundantly supplied: and we develope the obscurity of our understandings and the paucity of our faith, when we decide upon the quality of our spiritual interests by the quantity of our temporal acquisitions. The latter are the most equivocal proof of the divine esteem which can be cited, and afford no basis for our confidence, that we are interested in the blessings of the everlasting covenant. Bread and water, raiment and a dwelling are the sole earthly portion promised to the servants of the tabernacle. Their opulence is superior and more durable in its nature, precious and inestimable in its value. "Peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, the hope which is laid up in heaven," conquest of every enemy, triumph in dissolution, and a patrimony among the sanctified are the exalted privileges which are bestowed upon the children of the Kingdom. The grand object of their actions is that which the Merciful originally designed; to extend saving knowledge to propagate "pure and undefiled religion," to demonstrate the energy of supernal grace, to be conformed to the Forerunner's example, and so to "glorify God that they may enjoy him for ever."

2. God dwells in "this house which we have built." This residence of the Shepherd in the inferior habitations dedicated to his honour, comprises his presence with his people, the power of his grace upon them, his continual answer to their prayers, and the unquestionable enlargement of his dominion. When Solomon had made an end of praying all his "supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling, with his hands spread up to heaven; and he stood, and blessed all the congregation with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the Lord who hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he hath promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good pro-

“mise which he promised by the hand of Moses his ser-
 vant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with
 our fathers; let him not leave us nor forsake us: That
 he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his
 ways, and to keep his commandments, and his sta-
 tutes and his judgments, which he commanded our fa-
 thers. And let these my words, wherewith I have
 made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the
 Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the
 cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel
 at all times, as the matter shall require: that all the
 people of the earth may know that the Lord is God,
 and that there is none else. Let your heart therefore
 be perfect with the Lord your God, to walk in his sta-
 tutes, and to keep his commandments.”

In this house which we have built, the name of Jeho-
 vah is recorded, and his glories are proclaimed. The
 Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme and only
 object of adoration in this temple and to contemplate the
 sublime gospel which he has revealed should here be our
 undivided employment. To deplore our deficiencies, to
 invoke his mercy, to resound his praise and to imbibe
 scriptural truth combine the duties which we should per-
 form when we assemble in this abode for prayer. Those
 important evangelical principles of theology which will
 be elucidated and enforced within these walls are com-
 prised in this concise summary.

The existence and perfections of God which are de-
 monstrable from the admirable fabric of nature, are ir-
 refragably confirmed by the Divine Oracles. But these
 sacred books promulge the peculiar subjects of the Chris-
 tian ministry, which are essentially interesting to every
 rational creature. From the law and the testimony, the
 standard of appeal in all polemic divinity, we deduce our
 “faith which was once delivered to the saints.”

We believe and preach, That “God is a spirit. infi-
 nite, eternal, immutable, in his being, wisdom, power,
 holiness, justice, goodness and truth.” That Adam was
 formed from the dust of the earth, in the similitude of
 his glorious Creator, a moral and voluntary agent; who
 was seduced from his allegiance, and enticed into sin;

and that by his disloyalty, the image and favour of the Almighty were lost, pain and misery entered into our world, and himself became obnoxious to temporal and eternal death. That in consequence of this offence, all his posterity are corrupt, under the curse of the Law, and exposed to condemnation inheriting a lamentable propensity to evil, and a deplorable aversion from every spiritual good. That to man helpless and without hope, the Lord promulged his will in the Old and New Testaments, which are supported by irresistible evidence of their heavenly original—and these inspired writings contain all knowledge necessary for sinners, and all doctrines for experience and practice indispensable to salvation, the honour of the Ensign in this life, and in the future state our eternal delight. That in the unity of the Godhead, three distinct persons are declared to exist, and therefore to honour the son and the spirit equally with the Father is not idolatry. That according to “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” from his mere love, a saviour was early promised to our fallen race; his incarnation was repeatedly predicted; he had been long expected; and in “the fulness of time” appeared Emmanuel; who had been with “the mighty God from of old even from everlasting,” receiving the homage of angelic hosts in celestial dignity and felicity. That to verify ancient types and prophecies he was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary; lived a man of sorrows; having borne the burden of guilt in the garden, and having suffered the most contumelious indignities and lacerations; without a murmur submitted to be affixed to the torturous tree for the salvation of his brethren; there yielded up the ghost, and thus made a finished vicarious atonement to “redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” That he burst the bars of death on the third morning, and “having shewed himself alive, after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of his disciples during forty days, speaking to them of the things pertaining to his kingdom, and having given commandments unto the apostles whom he had called, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him from their

"sight to the right hand of God, where he maketh in-
 "tercession for us, the propitiation for our sins, and our
 "Advocate with the Father." That he was thus accur-
 "sed entirely for the ransom of those "who had been giv-
 "en to him in the eternal covenant;" all for whom Je-
 "sus died "being chosen in him previous to the foundati-
 "on of the world, that they might be holy and without
 "blame before him in love;" and their redemption be-
 "ing effected "after the good pleasure of his will to the
 "praise of the glory of his grace." That by nature all
 these are "conceived in sin, children of wrath even as
 "others;" until being efficaciously influenced by the om-
 nipotent agency of the spirit of Truth, they become
 "a willing people in the day of God's power, are fully
 "justified by faith through the perfect righteousness of
 "the Redeemer;" are savingly convinced of their diso-
 bedience, from sensible compunction are induced to seek
 the Treasure, and through operative grace indubitably
 believe the testimony of the gospel concerning Jesus, to
 whom they fly as to the only refuge provided for guilty
 perishing traitors. That it is the blessed privilege and
 indispensable duty of all those who are adopted as the
 sons of the Most High; constantly to attend to evangel-
 ical exhortations and commands; and fervently to labour
 that they may be always submissively conformed to their
 Priest's example "who was holy, harmless and undefiled."
 That they are bound by the strongest of all engagements,
 the "constraining love of Christ," assiduously to culti-
 vate every pure affection, and to prove themselves ani-
 mated by a living confidence, in a godly walk and spir-
 itual conversation. That their obligations refer to eve-
 ry species of obedience public, private, personal and re-
 lative; because they are compelled to exhibit "their
 "light before men, that others seeing their good works
 "may glorify their Father in heaven." That the Great
 Head of the Church is the source of vitality to all belie-
 vers who possess through him strength diligently to o-
 bey his precepts, patiently to endure trials, and coura-
 geously to resist temptation. That the "elect according
 "to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanc-
 "tification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling

“ of the blood of Jesus Christ, are kept by the mighty
 “ power of God through faith unto salvation;” and by
 his quickening energy imparted, are enabled to “ con-
 “ tinue to the end that they may be saved: being confi-
 “ dent of this very thing that he who hath begun a good
 “ work in them will perform it until the day of the Son
 “ of Man.” That in all places where the professed fol-
 lowers of the Lamb assemble for prayer, praise, medita-
 tion and the celebration of his ordinances, with them he
 is immediately present, and there is his Church. That
 Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the only sacramen-
 tal institutions appointed by our lawgiver; the former
 of which, being an external sign of admission within the
 covenant, may be administered by washing with water
 the children of believing parents, or of those who make
 a profession of faith, and adults if not baptised in infan-
 cy, after their conversion to God: the latter is an em-
 blem of the “ precious blood of Christ,” shed for sin, and
 himself wounded and broken for transgressors; which
 should be frequently commemorated, that his servants
 may shew their “ Lord’s death till he come.” That in
 consequence of the primitive decree pronounced in the
 garden of Eden upon our progenitor for his infidelity,
 the bodies of all mankind will be deposited in the tomb:
 upon the dissolution of mortality, the released spirits of
 the saints are present with Jesus in Paradise; but the
 souls of sinners are immediately separated from all their
 imaginary happiness, and depart into abiding despair.
 That the dark recesses of the grave retain the corrupti-
 ble corpses until the consummation of terrestrial scenes;
 then they shall be revived by the power of Christ, for
 “ the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God”
 shall reverberate, summoning the dead to arise and pre-
 pare for judgment; the immaterial portions shall be re-
 united to their respective fragile bodies which shall have
 become incorruptible and immortal; they shall appear
 at the tribunal of the Ancient of Days; there in righte-
 ousness he will decide the characters of men, and his
 lips will declare the equitable, and irrevocable sentence
 which shall determine the final condition of all. That
 “ the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment,”

to be tormented by the merited displeasure of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah ; and “the righteous into life eternal,” ever to dwell with the Lord ; in his presence they will appear to be redeemed from sin, and death and hell, by the merits *alone* of the glorious “Stone refused,” whose august name and infinite grace shall be adored by the myriads of the blessed through the countless ages of eternity.

Many attempts have been made to break this chain of holy doctrines and among us, men who have neither studied, nor even attempted to comprehend the cohesion of its links have vilified it with every opprobrious epithet. But one fact would, if it were correctly known and sufficiently appreciated teach *them* modesty in their expressions, if not total silence. During nearly four hundred years after our Lord’s resurrection, from the apostolic age, through the whole family of prestine martyrs, including those pious ministers who are emphatically denominated Fathers of the Church, these verities were unanimously admitted to be “the Word of God.” Wickliffe the morning star indisputably taught them, and from Martin Luther to Arminius they were never doubted. Since his era, the opposition to them has been more regular and systematic. But with the omission of Episcopius, Grotius, Limborch, Le Clerc and Wetstein, all the reputed writers in contradiction to these truths have been Clergymen of the Episcopal Church in England, of which this is the incontrovertible faith. To what principle shall we attribute the inconsistency of persons, who solemnly engage to promulge that which they publicly deny, and which they uniformly write to confute? Yet this charge must be alleged against Burnet, Whitby, Wesley and Fletcher: all of whom enjoyed the honours and emoluments of their offices in consequence of having appealed to the Searcher of hearts, that they “examined, “believed and were moved by the Holy Ghost to preach” articles which they perpetually declared to be “damnable, the offspring of hell,” and which they endeavoured by every method to exterminate. To these, who are the sole authors of eminence against our principles ; we oppose the churches universal, during the first four centu-

ries, and all those which have been established since the Reformation. For the Methodist societies alone excluded, they have been invariably of these sentiments. We follow the path of Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Cranmer, Calvin, Knox, Usher, Owen, the Westminster Assembly of Divines, Flavel, Ridgely, Watts, Doddridge, Gill and Whitfield, with a host of others who lived, "died in this faith, and being dead, yet speak." But the United States and especially the present generation afford more conclusive evidence of the coincidence of this creed with the preaching of the Apostles. From the original settlement of our country until this morning, every man of superior intellect, Mather, Edwards, Dickinson, Davies, Hopkins and Witherspoon with a multitude of their descendants have defended these opinions; and Edwards on the Free Will, it is confidently asserted, never can receive a reply worthy of a perusal. Where is our distinguished American adversary? He never existed. With the exception of clergymen of the Episcopalian church in England, who swear that they are Calvinists, and whose oath is more valid than disputatious effervescence—one man alone of our language possessing superior Biblical information, subscribes not to this explication of the sacred volume. Hence, the review of the church during sixty generations authorises the declaration, that ninety-nine hundredths of all the evangelical piety, and of all the collective theological illumination have implicitly believed, regularly experienced and illustriously triumphed in the grace, purity and consolations of this celestial knowledge.* Therefore this record of God's name, "in the house which we have built," shall be an impenetrable shield to guard us from the attack of

* As a tree is known by its fruits, and as "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit;" an opponent shall decide. A very forcible and ingenious essay, written by a most learned and enlightened modern, to overthrow the doctrines of Predestination, Efficacious Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints, thus concludes—"From the earliest period to our own days, if we consider the character of the

all assailants who would persuade us to "make shipwreck of faith," and a veritable guide to preserve us from the labyrinths of error. This is the habitation in which Jehovah has promised to display his mercy; and within these walls, his saints worship and wait for the reception of his benevolence. The condescension of him who "dwelleth in light unto which no man can approach," appears more stupendous from a contemplation of the character of those whom he deigns to bless, than from a view of his own superlative grandeur. We might presume that he who "is Love," would approve of those persons, whose motives, language and actions invariably tended to exhibit their conformity with his own purity and rectitude; but "hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth," his beneficence is extended to depraved, wilful, daring, and obstinate insurgents. The nature of this grace, the mode by which it is procured and imparted, and its recipients, all equally cause our astonishment. When man transgressed, "no eye pitied," and no created arm could have rescued; but the Friend of sinners engaged to appease the claims of justice, to restore the ruined rebel to a higher rank than that from which he fell, and by his intercession to reconcile the offended Almighty. The substitution being accepted by the Righteous Judge, an exhaustless magazine of all necessary supplies was deposited in the Redeemer's treasury, that from it those dispositions might be produced which should break the adamant heart, transform the rebellious temper and change the benighted, self-willed, corrupt offender into an enlightened, docile, religious servant actuated by filial engagements. To secure this glorious effect, celestial and most influential truths were delivered by the spirit of all grace to "holy men of God speaking as they are moved by him," and thus were pro-

"Jansenists and Calvinists, when compared with that of their antagonists the Jesuits and Arminians, we shall find that the former have excelled in no small degree in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues, and have been the highest honour of their own ages, and the best models for the imitation of posterity."

mulgated for the credence, government and consolation of mankind: and the wisdom of the Most High has so united the departments of his imperial administration, that subjection to the commands of Scripture is inseparably connected with every species of terrestrial comfort. To give energy and efficacy to the revelation which he has conferred, the regular interpretation of it has become the usual medium by which the Bridegroom vouchsafes to man that light and life which are indispensable to present and future enjoyment. When the register of his will is unclosed, the spirit who originally communicated it, stands to give its heavenly truths all their weight: and "the preaching of Christ and him crucified" demonstrates the immediate agency of "the finger of God," and that the place is Penuel. Wisdom the Lawgiver, not man speaks in this house: O that his voice may reach every conscience and render this meeting a Pentecost!

Congregations professedly assemble to worship the Branch of Righteousness; but they are accompanied by legion—lying, profane scurrilous, canting, frolic, sleepy, tempting, merry, envious, chattering, dishonest and wanton devils; and we, like the sons of Sceva, "take upon us to call over them the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preached: and the evil spirit is ready again to answer; Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are ye?" The Son of man sent his apostles and disciples unprovided and unprotected, "sheep among wolves, to preach that the kingdom of heaven was at hand;" at the close of their tour, they reported that although "they possessed neither purse, scrip nor shoes they "lacked nothing," and that "all diseases, even the devils were subject to them through his name." From this time for evermore, "Head of the Church triumphant," we pray thee, to assume thy own power and add to the ministrations of thy earthen vessels, the extermination of all the deaf and dumb devils who infest our neighbours and friends! And let thy marvellous acquiescence be visible in the blessed result of the declaration of thy truth!

In this spot God has promised to evince the potency of his two edged sword, and the alterative power of the

Balm of Gilead. Here through his aid stupidity shall be excited, obduracy mollified, carelessness arrested, infidelity confuted, corruption counteracted, humanity meliorated, and the hosts of hell defeated. The transformation of character which is the consequence of the effusion of his liberality, introduces man into a sacred intimacy with the supreme Being, and to him this tabernacle assumes another appearance, and mingles with all his sensibilities. He is delighted when they say, "let us go up to the house of the Lord;" it is the residence of his Father, there, every word which he hears, reminds him of his indebted gratitude, his past mercies, his present exigencies, and his distant prospects. To him its Master is propitious; all his petitions are immediately heard, all his necessities are richly supplied, all his graces are powerfully enlivened and Christ's ambassador addresses the external organ; but to him, it is the "shout of the King," and his "heart burns." His affections are no longer cemented with earth, to paradise they fly; his anxieties are no more circumscribed by this perishable state, they are principally transferred to unseen realities, and the consuming fire to him, is not an avenger, ready to inflict the punishments of justice, but "a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Internal corruption is here mortified, doubt removed, fear dispersed, difficulties elucidated, the path to heaven unfolded, and strength divine obtained. Christ with his own invaluable blood purchased these superabundant blessings, that he might save to the uttermost all who approach unto him;" Infinite Wisdom devised the mode of donation, to the "chief of sinners, sick and lost;" and "God in very deed dwells with men on the earth, and in this house which we have built" to superintend and attest their exact distribution.

Hence, if as criminal dying transgressors, for whom no mode of escape from the "wrath to come" exists, but that which mercy has devised, and which the Author and Finisher of faith abides here to bestow, we are finally and irrecoverably damned; to whom shall our station in "Tophet's everlasting burnings" be attributed? To the Mediator, who opened the way, and constantly besought you to fly to the "city of refuge?" To the min-

isters of the "Principal among ten thousands and altogether lovely," who admonished, exhorted, reproved, intreated you, and suffered your hatred, and persecutions without a murmur that they might be instrumental to enable you to see with your eyes, "and hear with your ears, and understand with your hearts and be converted and healed?" or to the Holy Ghost who filled this temple with his presence, intentionally to impress, alarm, intimidate and allure you? No—Conscience will add inconceivably to your misery—as no plea, excuse, or defence will alleviate the terrific sentence of condemnation. For while the prophet "dwells in this house" to exemplify a condescension vast beyond all understanding—by unceasing attention to the solitudes of those who "hear his voice and live"—his omniscience not less scrutinizes, them "who are at ease in Zion," hypocritical professors—them who stifle the thunders of conscience, and the strivings of the spirit, deluded procrastinators—them who like "Gallio care for none of these things," infatuated madmen—them who endeavour to eradicate all sensations in connection with futurity, "Sadducees, who err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God"—and them who say, "we will not have this man to reign over us," incorrigible Idolaters and Ephramites, "Let them alone!"

1. We should most cautiously regulate our conduct! The perfections of God, particularly his omniscience, most vigorously affect every serious mind, and directly tend to produce uniform sincerity in our deportment. Human applause has a strong ascendancy over the conduct; how infinitely more important is the approbation of the Deity! and in proportion to our calculation of its value will be its influence upon the dispositions and purposes of the heart. Hypocrisy before him "with whom we have to do, to whose eyes all things are naked and open" is, of all tempers the most ridiculous: because no external form, or assumption of zeal can deceive that perfect intelligence which pierces the most disguised and plausible subtlety; and no wickedness can be more odious to the truth than the attempt to impose upon him by detestible dissimulation. A mere exhibition of solemn

nity and devotion is worthless; and to the man's own reflections, such reverence must appear most insignificant, contemptible and iniquitous. We despise the absurd extravagance of the "priests of Baal who cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives and lances, until the blood gushed from them," to interest nonentity on their behalf, and with Elijah mock them; their deity "was talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or asleep and must be awaked:" but it is more unreasonable, to worship a God whom we believe to be attentive to us with no design to insure his plaudit, than to divert an idol's regard from other occupations, or to arouse him when slumbering by insensate clamour. One Supreme alone exists, "Jesus Christ, the true God and eternal life;" hence every sceptic of whatever grade, whether he deny the attributes, providence or redemption of the Deliverer, is Baal's prophet virtually an atheist, "without hope and without God in the world."

Our liability to deception and the accurate retribution of the all-seeing Judge warn us from presuming to invade, by rashly censuring our fellow-mortals, the indiscreptible prerogative of the "Son of man." The appellate jurisdiction of him who is enthroned in "Heaven, the habitation of his holiness," invincibly condemns this most indefensible arraignment of others' motives; and preserves us from immoderate depression under the unjust reproaches of those who unadvisedly or malignantly misrepresent our conduct. Man being rational and responsible, the inequalities of Providence must be vindicated, and the anticipations of conscience certified upon the day of judgment; which, with all its momentous consequences is necessarily inferred from his boundless knowledge, "who will judge the world in righteousness." These considerations should excite not simplicity in all our sacred exercises only, but universal purity of spirit and integrity of conversation; shield us from the deviations of iniquity; and animate us under the injuries of injustice. No veil can conceal us from his countenance; no secrecy be impervious to his notice; and no action be obliterated from his recollections; consequently meditated mischief which was not perpetrated, and guilty

projects however privately devised, will not eventually escape with impunity. "The adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face. The murderer rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. But there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves."

Sinner! neither criminality known to thyself alone, nor the sins of solitude; nor the undeniable silence of thy companions in vice; nor even the protracted indulgence of thy corrupt propensities undiscovered until thy separation from the body, can secure thee from inscrutable Omnipresence. Thy unknown fears shall be realized; thy untold terrors experienced; thy solitary dread infuriated; and thy tremendous condemnation be justified by thy own impartial judgment when thy departure from the presence of the King shall be proclaimed. That great, awful, critical, exact, just, universal, convincing, clear, supreme and final scrutiny will include not our external biography alone, but the secret history of the soul; the evils which we have executed, the good neglected, the grace abused, and the crimes which we have occasioned. Start Son of Perdition, fly! thy ruin will be aggravated; by the number of the spectators who will be witnesses of the true development of thy character—for all the hosts of heaven, all the generations of men, all the planetary and stellar inhabitants, and all the infernal ghosts will be present; by thy previous care to hide thy offences; and by the exhibition of thy real personal qualities: these will overwhelm thee in confusion eternal. Thou shalt possess the "worm that never dieth and fire unquenchable" in all their horrors: incessant lamentations for bliss irreparably lost; unsuccessful attempts to escape from the miserable company of which thou art an associate; doleful sensations indissolubly chained to augmenting despair; and interminable damnation.

The humble upright Christian is exhilarated by the same principles which torture the disobedient. Amid slander and blame his conscience acquits him; and from the partial or iniquitous sentiments of men, he appeals

to an infallible decision irreversible. Retirement, or publicity, changes him not ; he acts from a superior impulse ; feels more dignified than to submit to the contracted opinions of short sighted or perversely self blinded creatures ; and esteems no privilege so precious as Peter's experience. " Simon, son of Jonas," said Jesus, " lovest thou me ?" And he replied, " Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." This solemn affirmation is more weighty than mountains of gold, more satisfying than the most unbridled sensual pleasure, and more durable than the most lasting terrestrial honour. Those views, which almost petrify the ungodly who are not ingulphed in judicial blindness, are the grand source of a believer's consolation : the grave will devour his imperfections ; " death to him is the gate of endless joy ; and judgment will settle him in happiness unextinguishable and unbounded.

" O may these thoughts possess our breast,

" Where e'er we rove, where e'er we rest ;

" Nor let our weaker passions dare,

" Consent to sin ! For God is there."

2. We should display the most unremitting gratitude ! Our station in the universe, the protecting combinations of Providence, the ceaseless blessings of redemption and the submission of Jehovah " demand perpetual songs of praise. Goodness and mercy have followed us" from the dawns of infancy through all our progressive years. But our gratefulness must not be confined to the expression alone of the lip ; it should be a spiritually minded property exemplified in a life " adorning the doctrine of our Saviour." Thanksgiving to our Most High Benefactor is genuine only when it is thus accompanied : and it includes in addition to our private exercises of devotion, the regularity of domestic worship, our sedulous attendance upon the public ordinances of religion, and the characteristic influence of divine impressions exhibited in " the path of the just." " We indeed dream of Heaven," while " the throne of grace" is deserted : the family " altar not built to the God of Bethel ;" the means of grace on the Lord's day, and upon other opportunities, if any frivolous excuse can be contrived, slighted ; and

no proof offered that the penitence, faith, hope, love, mortification and cross of the Christian ever operate in us to "good works." "Ingratitude and rebellion are as the sin of witchcraft;" which is the direct insult of every divine attribute: and what insensibility can be more monstrous than to discover and express no acknowledgments for continual kindness, personal, relative, retrospective, present and anticipated. "God dwells with men on the earth;" shall his majesty excite no respect and affection? and "in this house which we have built?" and shall his condescension produce no purifying, encouraging gratitude?

3 We should continually feel anxious that Jehovah reside in his temple, our hearts! Individuality is the essence of religion. "To see the Redeemer for ourselves and not for another" is the sole source of "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." But this sight of Jesus is spiritual; comprising our approbation, confidence, docility, knowledge, experience and enjoyment of him; which although in this state defective, gradually increases until dissolution, and after the "door shall be shut," will not be "through a glass darkly, but face to face." It presupposes conviction of our need of him, godly sorrow and repentance, self loathing and abasement, contempt of the world, love and resemblance to him, and holy inquietude to behold more of the diadem. Until we know that "we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; and have bought gold tried in the fire, and white raiment that we may be clothed, and eyesalve to anoint our eyes that we may see;" the Judge is not our friend and a resident in our souls. "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify him in your body and spirit which are God's. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? what communion hath light with darkness? what concord hath Christ with Beliel? what part hath he who believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple 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. Wherefore
 “ come out from among them, and be ye separate, and
 “ touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you,
 “ and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my
 “ sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Hence
 it is evident that the qualifications of the disciple, as
 they are described in the Gospel, are essential to our
 temporal consolation and unalterable fruition. Deficien-
 cy is fatal ; no medium exists ; and we are either sheep
 or goats ; sons of Beliel, or brethren of Christ ; crim-
 inals of hell or heirs of Paradise. “ Now the works of
 “ the flesh are manifest, adultery, fornication, unclean-
 “ ness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, va-
 “ riance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
 “ envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such
 “ like ; of the which I have told you in time past, that
 “ they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom
 “ of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, peace, long
 “ suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and
 “ temperance. Be not deceived ; God is not mocked ;
 “ whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”
 Messiah will not inhabit the unbelieving corrupt heart ;
 his dwelling like himself is sanctification ; and if he be
 not the “ Master of the house,” unhappy indeed is our
 journey through this wilderness, and dreadful must be
 our forebodings of futurity. Unwearied watchfulness
 against sin, reiterated prayer for purity and grace from
 the fount of cleansing, the acquisition of every holy de-
 sire from the “ riches in glory,” and a “ conscience void
 of offence towards God and men,” must characterize
 those with whom “ Jehovah dwells upon earth.”

4. We ought always to enter this temple with the high-
 est reverence and devotion.

“ Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,
 “ and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice
 “ of fools ; for they consider not that they do evil. Be
 “ not rash with thy mouth and let not thine heart be has-
 “ ty to utter any thing before God : for God is in hea-
 “ ven and thou upon earth ; fear thou God.” Here we
 assemble to worship the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

to offer prayer for necessary blessings, to swell our grateful praise, and to imitate the doctrines of supernal origin. God fills this structure with his immensity; his knowledge extends to every thought, motive and purpose of the heart; the redemption which he offers like himself is perfect; every promise that he has made has been or shall be eventually fulfilled; these walls record his name; in this temple he waits to be gracious; and here we are authorized to expect "his unspeakable gift." Before we approach his dwelling, we should therefore prepare rightly to hear the word of life: we should cultivate according to the rules of his truth, that seriousness which banishes a trifling spirit; that abstraction which capacitates us for the full reception of evangelical instructions; that faith which realizes the divine omniscience; that "hope which purifies the heart;" and that estimate of the importance of solemn verities, and of our responsibility for the proper improvement of them, which may enable us to honour the Prophet in our individual enjoyments.

In the revolution of time, our infants will attend as auditors of the everlasting Gospel; and we believe, "Lord, help our unbelief!" that here they shall call thee blessed, and with an "unwavering tongue cry, Abba, Father." After the lapse of years, their bodies shall mingle with this matter in that earth, now separated as the dormitory of our ashes, in which they shall securely rest, until "the corruptible must put on incorruption, and the mortal be clothed in immortality." Mark! "the heavens and the earth pass away with a great noise; and the Son of man sends forth his angels to gather his elect" from the four winds of the universe. If we "shall have slept in Jesus," with what pious exultation will our families and friends retread this hallowed spot: where their petitions, songs and contemplations were one; the same invocations supplied our mutual wants; our combined melody was accepted by God; and identical truths enlightened our minds, quickened our sensibilities, increased our devotion and invigorated our exertions to attain the joys of Paradise. Hear the resuscitated throng with holy triumph unanimously shouting. "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!" See them all flying from this place in

which they adored Emmanuel in prison, in "the days of the years of their pilgrimage," to the right hand; their temporary stations in this church commuted for a fixture as pillars in the New Jerusalem, never more to go out of that blissful congregation. Behold, the "holy city appears;" there the "inhabitant is no more poor, bereft or sick;" and there the righteous walk clothed in splendid "robes washed white in the blood of the sacrifice;" crowned with victory, "swelling the golden harps;" immovably established in the inheritance of bliss inconceivable, and "shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." That we may realize this enrapturing perspective; the Lord's day must be faithfully sanctified, the means of grace constantly improved, the ordinances of Christianity regularly celebrated, and the diversified duties of religion incessantly performed—then, after the vicissitudes of this vale of tears shall have ceased for the unchangeable eternity before us, having experienced to our ineffable delight, that "Jehovah in very deed dwells in this house with men on the earth;" we shall be transmitted to the ecstatic vision of God and the Lamī, in the mansions of boundless felicity for ever and ever.

ERRATA.

Page 9, line 17 from the top, for *foreknowledge*, read *knowledge*.

Page 21, line 12 from the bottom, for *determined*, read *exterminated*.

Page 27, line 7 from the bottom, for *examined*, read *examino*.